



the church of  
ireland -  
apologetic for  
mission?

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THE  
**mission**  
TO END LEPROSY



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*"Mission is at the core of what we believe about ourselves in the Church of Ireland"*

# foreword



A conversation is taking place within the Church of Ireland.

In his Presidential address to the 2016 General Synod the Archbishop of Armagh suggested that commemorating 150 years since Disestablishment was an opportunity to have "a comprehensive, objective and external review" of ourselves as a Church community.

This is a courageous and helpful invitation to "lovingly, but also critically, to tell us where we as a Christian tradition on this island need to strike out in new directions, while also valuing what we have received though succeeding generations".

Archbishop Clarke continued, "the Church of Ireland must look beyond its own self-interest and its own survival ... (to) look beyond the present into the future to which we believe God is calling us".

In saying this he was affirming that mission is at the core of what we believe about ourselves in the Church of Ireland.

Concerning the Church of Ireland's mission, the Archbishop said that "mission is almost always in a local context - whether diocese, parish or other local community... How this will happen will inevitably be different according to place and context". The role of the central Church is to give "as much support and structural shape as it can achieve, in order to serve local communities in their mission and service to the world".





Under the theme of 'Shaping to Serve' the Primate recognised the efforts and work of so many over generations, to this present day.

He also noted the challenge to "reshape some of our structures so that they may more effectively serve the wider life, outreach and witness of the Church into the long-term".

In 2016 The Mission To End Leprosy, formerly known as The Leprosy Mission Ireland, commissioned Rev Earl Storey to complete a research paper, now entitled *The Church of Ireland - Apologetic for Mission*. It asked what the Church of Ireland believed about mission, what affected its ability to deliver on this and what changes might encourage its effectiveness.

This paper includes the headline findings of that research. The full report is available to download online at [missionreport.leprosy.ie](http://missionreport.leprosy.ie).

We are grateful for the commitment of generations within the Church of Ireland to the mission of Christ in our world. Our simple desire is for the wellbeing of the Church and to the furtherance of its mission.

We offer this paper as a contribution to the conversation encouraged by the Archbishop of Armagh and would be delighted to engage further in that conversation.



Ken Gibson

CEO The Mission to End Leprosy





*"... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

Acts 1:8 NIV



# introduction



A small group of people had just lived through traumatic circumstances that would have shaken their confidence to the core. Some of them were city dwellers but many of them were born and brought up in the country.

It was to such a collection of people that Christ spoke shortly after His crucifixion and resurrection. The disciples did not always fully understand what their master taught them. He also had a habit of presenting them with tasks beyond that of which they believed they were capable.

Shortly before leaving His disciples and ascending into heaven Christ gave His disciples both a promise and a commission, "... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."<sup>1</sup>

From this small ordinary group of people grew one of the most mission-oriented organizations the world has ever known. Somehow, the message with which they were entrusted with went from Jerusalem to every corner of the earth. Global mission – a commitment to take the message to every part of the globe, including home, was born in that moment.

The existence of the Church of Ireland is evidence that those first Middle Eastern disciples acted upon that commission. By its very existence the Church of Ireland is part of the fruits of that global mission.

*"Global mission – a commitment to take the message to every part of the globe, including home – was born in that moment. The existence of the Church of Ireland is evidence that those first Middle Eastern disciples acted upon that commission."*



In a speech in Cape Town Robert Kennedy said,

There is a Chinese curse that says 'May he live in interesting times.' Like it or not we live in interesting times. They are times of danger and uncertainty; but they are also more open to the creative energy of men than any other time in history.

Through the significant moments of its history the Church of Ireland has shown its resilience and ability to adapt to new circumstances. It has lived in *interesting times*. From the upheaval of Disestablishment in 1871 it has navigated through the shifting ground of Irish society and politics to the present day. It now shares the challenge of the rest of the Christian Church on this island – of finding its place in a very different Irish society. In an age of economic challenge it must also find new ways to make itself sustainable. Above all, it must discern how it can be true to its calling – to be missional?

The Irish Church owes its very existence to the DNA of global mission that grew from those first disciples that Christ commissioned. It has famously reproduced that DNA throughout its history as Christians from these shores set out into the unknown with the same message.

This paper asks whether or not today's Church of Ireland shares that same commitment to mission – to carry the message out beyond its own confines.

It does so by asking four questions:

- 1.** Does the Church of Ireland have an apologetic for mission, including global mission?
- 2.** If such an apologetic exists does the Church of Ireland demonstrate it in action?
- 3.** What factors affect the ability of the Church of Ireland to deliver on any major stated priority, including mission?
- 4.** Are there key changes the Church of Ireland can make to increase its effectiveness in mission?






*The Church is the only society on earth that exists for the benefit of non-members"*

William Temple - Archbishop of Canterbury



# a church of ireland apologetic for mission?



The word apologetic has two meanings. The most familiar meaning is to express sorrow or regret for something. The other, to have a reasoned argument for something in which one believes. The second meaning is at the heart of this exploration.

There are two ways of finding out whether or not a denomination can demonstrate an apologetic for mission. One is to look at what it says in its most important documents. The other is to observe what is demonstrated in action.

- 1.** Texts in seminal documents in the Church of Ireland suggest that mission is by no means peripheral to what it believes to be important. These include:
  - a.** Service of Ordination for Priests
  - b.** Service of Ordination or Consecrating of a Bishop
  - c.** Vision Statement of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute

“The church is the church only when it exists for others”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

- d. Mission Statement from the House of Bishops
  - e. Statements made and priorities demonstrated by the work of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland
  - f. APCK (Association for Promoting Christian Knowledge), which is linked to the Church of Ireland but independent from it. It acts as a publisher for the Church of Ireland.
2. Key texts from the wider Anglican Communion, including:
- a. Five Marks of Mission<sup>2</sup>
  - b. Towards Dynamic Mission: Renewing the Church for Mission<sup>3</sup>
  - c. Anglicans In Mission: A Transforming Journey<sup>4</sup>

As a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion the Church of Ireland can find its apologetic for mission within the Anglican Consultative Council's *Five Marks of Mission*:<sup>5</sup>

- 1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.
- 2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers.
- 3. To respond to human need by loving service.

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2 <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/identity/marks-of-mission.aspx>

3 Anglican Consultative Council Mission Issues and Strategy Advisory Group

4 Mission Commission of the Anglican Communion

5 <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/identity/marks-of-mission.aspx>

4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation.
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "The church is the church only when it exists for others".<sup>6</sup>

David Bosch says, "We stand in need of an interpretation of salvation which operates within a comprehensive Christological framework, which makes His ... incarnation, earthly life, death, resurrection and parousia – indispensable for church and theology".<sup>7</sup>

For Bosch this included:

1. Total salvation to total need
2. Individual as well as society
3. Soul and body
4. Present and future
5. It is as broad and deep as the needs and experiences of human existence

William Temple, a former Archbishop of Canterbury, put it very simply when he said, "Church is the only society on earth that exists for the benefit of non-members".

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6 Page 375 Quoted in Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission

7 Page 399 Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission





# mission: more than apologetic?

Peter Drucker says there are two crucial questions any organization should ask itself. *What's your business ... and ... how's business?*

Can the Church of Ireland point to significant evidence to support its stated commitment to mission, both locally and globally? Whilst difficult to accurately quantify there is evidence of work going on at all levels to make good on that commitment.

- 1.** Stated Diocesan Mission Initiatives.
- 2.** Long Term Church: In line with the vision of the Archbishop of Armagh for the future of the Church, Long Term Church combines a number of strategic projects which will develop and re-organise the central Church in order that it can better support the missional and pastoral strategy of the whole Church of Ireland.
- 3.** Bishops' Appeal - the Church of Ireland World Aid and Development Programme.
- 4.** The Priorities Fund was established in 1980. It supports projects within the Church of Ireland, including the following categories: community, areas of need and outreach initiatives.

5. Diocesan Link Projects: A number of dioceses in the Church of Ireland run significant mission projects with link dioceses or organizations.
6. Mission Links; According to a 2007 Survey some 99 parishes had links using the mission agencies and 54 parishes had more than one link.
7. There are a range of bodies, run by the Church of Ireland, with the purpose of meeting practical need. These range from Boards of Social Action, retirement homes and other initiatives. The Church also run a large number of schools, particularly in the Republic of Ireland, as well as chaplaincies in various institutions. The Church of Ireland Directory lists over forty national organisations and also many local bodies.
8. There are high levels of volunteering amongst members of the Church of Ireland, contributing to local communities and meeting practical need.
9. Mission Agencies: The Church of Ireland Directory lists 14 constituent members (Mission Agencies) of AMS (Association of Mission Societies). These agencies promote mission in many manifestations in a variety of global locations.
10. Short-term Mission Trips: These provide opportunities for groups or individuals from the Church of Ireland to visit a partner location in another part of the world.
11. Use of clergy from overseas.
12. The Mothers Union is one of the most significant organizations in the Church of Ireland, represented in every diocese and in the majority of parishes across the denomination. The vision of the Mothers' Union is 'a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful, and flourishing relationships'.<sup>8</sup> From this

flows the mission of the organization 'to show our Christian faith by the transformation of communities ... worldwide'.

- 13.** Boards and Committees of General Synod: The existence of a variety of bodies established by the General Synod suggests a stated commitment to mission, both locally and globally, within the Church of Ireland.
- 14.** In recent years the Church of Ireland has established mechanisms to address significant social issues. These have included:
  - a.** The Hard Gospel process.
  - b.** A number of Committees of the General Synod, such as the Church & Society Commission.
  - c.** The Select Committee on Human Sexuality in the Context of Christian Belief
- 15.** Eco-Congregations: These take an eco approach to worship, lifestyle, property and finance management, community outreach and contact with the developing world.
- 16.** Challenges of recession: Anecdotal evidence suggests many local actions by parishes to help alleviate need. Comments from interviewees also suggest a frustration with the Church of Ireland regarding what it has been able to speak into this context.
- 17.** Parish level mission: 'If it is not happening in a parish then its not happening' may be a useful maxim for observing life within the church of Ireland. It is difficult to quantify mission activity that takes place at parish level across the Church of Ireland. Undoubtedly significant mission is being carried on in many parishes.





# mission: implementation deficit disorder

Irish Management Consultant, Eddie Molloy, utilises the term "Implementation Deficit Disorder"<sup>9</sup> to describe the struggles faced by any organization seeking to deliver on a priority. Molloy uses the image of an iceberg when describing such challenges:<sup>10</sup>

- The visible part of the iceberg as representing visible challenges that can include structures, core processes, funding and skills.
- The invisible or hidden part of the iceberg as representing the cultural challenges such as values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudice and mindset.

This model is used to illustrate the obstacles facing the Church of Ireland in its commitment to mission.

## 1. The Visible Iceberg

- a. *Process becomes the thing*: The danger that having the correct process becomes the measure of success rather than achieving actual outcomes.

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9 Presentation to Social Workers Adult Mental Health Conference (25/04/14)

10 Ibid

- b.** *Execution:* The capacity to complete assigned tasks and responsibilities to customary or specified standards within a certain timeframe. Does the Church of Ireland have the machinery to drive a mission agenda forward?
- c.** *Beyond a Mission Statement:* The failure to create a mechanism or process for allowing the House of Bishop's Mission Statement to inform the priorities or actions of dioceses, parishes or key bodies within the Church of Ireland means it is an aspiration of which few are aware and by which few are guided.
- d.** *Accountability:* This is the simple process of reporting on whether one took the action to which one committed.. Reporting in the Church of Ireland is usually retrospective without an emphasis on planned action for the future. Success may be poorly defined with little consequence for non delivery.
- e.** *One size doesn't fit all:* The desire for representation on boards and committees needs to be balanced with ensuring appropriate competencies for the task in hand.
- f.** *Energy reserves:* When one interviewee mused that "*We are a well-resourced heritage society with a modest religious affairs department*" he / she was referring to the large legacy of buildings that the Church of Ireland has to maintain; with the impact this has and the demands this makes on energy and resources.

## 2. The Invisible Iceberg

- a. *Organizational culture*: "People within an organizational culture share a tacit understanding of the way the world works, their place in it, the informal and formal dimensions of their workplace, and the value of their actions. It controls the way their people act and behave, how they talk and inter-relate, how long it takes to make decisions, how trusting they are and, most importantly, how effective they are at delivering results".<sup>11</sup> The Church of Ireland must assess in what ways organizational culture impacts and affects its ability to act on the priority of mission.
- b. *History, psyche and identity*: Has history helped create a psyche described by one interviewee as being about "... keeping ourselves safe, secure and maintaining the status quo", or the temptation to keep the 'head below the parapet'? This, it is suggested, also contributed to a fear of diluting cultural identity and a fear of being accused of 'sheep stealing'.
- c. *Passing it on to the next generation*: Maintaining the church and passing it on to the next generation was a strong characteristic noted by one interviewee. They commented "Locally we see mission (in the same way) as transmission of the land. We want to pass it on as good, or better, than we got it. Transmission of faith and land (can be) mutually interpretative in rural minority communities".
- d. Theological struggles with mission

- e. Lesser motives of mission as practiced in the past can discourage current involvement.
- f. Evangelism is something with which the Church of Ireland can struggle. That struggle is both in its theology and practice. By virtue of its own cultural instincts, and because it now finds itself in a more pluralist society, the Church of Ireland faces the challenge of understanding and articulating what it means by evangelism.
- g. The struggle with evangelism is sometimes not just theological but extends to methodologies that seem culturally alien.
- h. Evangelism can be seen as an unspoken marker to demarcate contrasting camps of churchmanship and theological outlook within the Church of Ireland.
- i. It can be difficult to keep in mind the heart and theological imperative that motivates us to acts of service.

### 3. The sea upon which the iceberg floats

The Church of Ireland does not exist in a cultural, economic or political vacuum. External influences bear upon its ability or disposition to be missional, either at home or globally, most notably:

- a. Distrust of institutions.
- b. Postmodern culture.
- c. The change in the nature of Irish society, the place of the Church within that society and the changing level of influence that the Church exerts on culture and society.



- d.** The development of rapidly changing and increasingly multi-cultural and multi-faith societies in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
- e.** The changing patterns of church attendance on this island, from which the Church of Ireland is not immune.
- f.** Unrelenting financial pressure and its effect on the energy for thinking missionally, either at home or abroad.

#### **4.** Leadership challenges

- a.** For any organization to make good on what it chooses to make a priority it will require leadership.
- b.** In times of uncertainty or in a risk averse organization people want answers rather than questions. They desire to be told that they will be protected from the pain of change.
- c.** Leaders must be sufficiently skilled and have the necessary personality or temperament to fulfill the expected job requirements, particularly those involving inter-personal contact with people who may feel discomfited.
- d.** There is the challenge of training clergy to be relevant rather than for a world that no longer exists.



*"We can not give away what we do not have".*



# mission: lessons for the church of ireland

There are crucial lessons for the Church of Ireland if mission is to be as much in the DNA of what it does as what it says.

- 1.** *Stirring of the waters:* There are serious stirrings of commitment to the Church of Ireland being a missional organization and a gradual wrestling with how this aspiration can become reality.
- 2.** *Spiritual renewal at local level:* This has been identified as key to the mission of the Church. "We can not give away what we do not have".<sup>12</sup>
- 3.** *Structures fit for purpose:* There is an underlying mood for General Synod and denominational structures to be more focused, efficient and goal-driven. "One of the characteristic and fundamental missionary tasks of the Church is to examine and review its structures to see that they continue to remain suitable for mission".<sup>13</sup>

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12      Comment from Council for Mission Breakout Group: 2014 General Synod  
13      Page 9 Towards Dynamic Mission: Renewing the Church for mission  
(Jaci Maraschin)



CRAWFORD COMMERCIAL PARK



4. *The diocese is a key unit for mission development.* Working at a diocesan level allows for a process to coalesce around a specific vision and to act strategically to see it realized.
5. *Leading in mission:* For mission, or indeed any other priority in the Church of Ireland, to become more than aspiration requires leadership. That leadership involves two processes - diagnosis and action.

Effective leadership at any level in the Church of Ireland is about interventions that mobilize people to address worthy challenges. Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and to thrive.

6. *Episcopal leadership:* Mission should be central to what the Church of Ireland does and bishops have a key role in this as 'brokers' of mission in their own dioceses.
7. *Clergy:* Clergy are, and have been, trained to be pastors. They also need to be equipped with the skills and expertise to be adaptive leaders.
8. *Resourcing leaders:* Ministry and vocation are not unique to clergy. They are to be exercised by every member of the church. The model of *every member* ministry is both biblical and Anglican. The Church of Ireland needs to consider how this might be encouraged, and new and appropriate models developed.
9. *Agents for mission:* The changed financial circumstances of recent years forces every mission agency to constantly refresh a sense of purpose. Survival for its own sake is not enough.
10. The Church needs to identify the most effective body or bodies or mechanism(s) to promote mission within the Church of Ireland?



# conclusion



Our interviewees had varied reflections on what is needed to make the Church of Ireland more effective in mission.

*It is no man's vision. It is the work of God.*

*A key task is to challenge inertia and show that mission is do-able in any parish no matter how small.*

*... to see the Church of Ireland Mission Statement revisited and manifested in action.*

*... to see the culture of the Church of Ireland more closely aligned with the sentiments of the quote by Archbishop Temple: "The Church is the only cooperative society in the world that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members."*

*... the need to see not only a change of management style within the Church but also, more importantly, a change of ... culture.*

*Churchmanship is now irrelevant.*

*Go back to the Missio Deo<sup>14</sup>*

*God has to allow a crisis to bring us short to get us to listen again.*

"It's only when the tide goes out that you learn who's been swimming naked". Warren Buffett is famously one of the

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Latin Christian theological term that can be translated as the "mission of God," or the "sending of God."

world's most successful investors. In these words he is expressing a powerful truth. Anyone can give the illusion of success, or indeed of just being busy. Whether that success or busyness has any substance will be seen when the testing times come – when the tide goes out.

Buffett has put his finger on something – that there comes a time when the substance of what we build is tested. He might be surprised to see his observation echoed in the Bible.

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.<sup>15</sup>

It is the same principle. We can work with great enthusiasm at something. It can have all the appearance of success and busyness. Yet the time always comes when the true worth of what we are building is tested. In Buffett's principle, it is the workings of the market that bring the reckoning. The broader Christian principle is that God himself assesses the true value of what we work to create. Apparently He is considerably more astute than even the markets!

As a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion the Church of Ireland can find its apologetic for mission within the Anglican Consultative Council's *Five Marks of Mission*:<sup>16</sup>

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15 I Corinthians 3:11-15

16 <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/identity/marks-of-mission.aspx>

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers.
3. To respond to human need by loving service.
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation.
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

We could continue to note all sorts of management language – about the need for churches to make sure they are doing the right things for the right reasons, and doing them in the right way. Some of that language is indeed helpful in pointing us back to the heart of something:

Be both realistic and optimistic even though some people would like you to choose one or the other. Continue to remember your commitment to a better organization, community and world; be disciplined in reflecting on the outcome of your efforts; forgive yourself for your mistakes and enjoy the process of learning in action. Finally, stay in touch with your deep desire to contribute to the lives of other people.”<sup>17</sup>

Whilst this is true it is also worth noting the comment of one interviewee who talked of how “God drives us out into the wilderness so that we can re-envision the future” It is a reminder that living out an apologetic for mission is a profoundly spiritual journey – a willingness to allow the Holy Spirit to recapture our hearts with old truths. It is about the Church looking for new ways to do something old – to fulfill the mission of serving suffering humanity and bringing it a message of hope.



In that sense nothing about the ministry of Jesus has changed. '***And a man with leprosy came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."*** Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.'<sup>18</sup>

The phrase 'searching for the silver bullet' comes from folklore. Legend had it that the only way to kill a werewolf was with a silver bullet. Finding the silver bullet became a way of describing a specific, fail-safe, even magic solution to a problem.

There are rarely 'silver bullet' solutions to any important challenge. But significant action and change is usually possible! This is no less so as the Church of Ireland works to match its apologetic for mission to reality.

The report of the Council for Mission to the 2012 General Synod suggests that the journey to effectiveness in mission by the Church of Ireland will be taken at many levels:

... there can be a leaning towards spiritual consumerism which places personal spiritual preferences above the life of the Christian community. There may also be a deep-seated desire to preserve what we have and who we are rather than face change and growth ... there is a need to exercise trust and recognize that visionaries need to be heard and their visions discerned and then acted upon. But national gatherings and voices are needed to keep the mission central and to share the stories.<sup>19</sup>

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18 Matthew 8:2-3

19 Page 340

At whatever level work takes place the key processes are still diagnosis and action. As one person commented, "The commitment to execution is a spiritual issue".

*This paper includes the headline findings of  
'The Church of Ireland – Apologetic for Mission?'*

*The full report is available to download online at [missionreport.leprosy.ie](https://missionreport.leprosy.ie)*



# questions for reflection

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Whether personally or in a group you may find the following questions helpful as you reflect on this paper.

## introduction & chapter one

'A small group of people had just lived through traumatic circumstances that would have shaken their confidence to the core. Some of them were city dwellers but many of them were born and brought up in the country.

It was to such a collection of people that Christ spoke a matter of weeks after His crucifixion and resurrection. The disciples did not always fully understand what their master taught them. He also had a habit of presenting them with tasks beyond what they believed were their capabilities.

Shortly before leaving His disciples and ascending into heaven Christ gave His disciples a promise and a commission (Acts 1:8). "... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."<sup>20</sup>

1. Put yourself in the place of those early disciples – can you describe how you would have been feeling when Christ gave you the Great Commission (Acts 1:8)?

2. Do you recognise any of the feelings you have just described when we discuss the Church of Ireland and mission?
3. Do you agree with the '5 Marks of Mission' as a description of Christian Mission? (See Page 19)
4. Can you describe examples of each of the '5 Marks of Mission' that you see being worked out somewhere in the Church of Ireland?
5. What encourages you when you describe them?
6. What is to be learnt from each of your examples?
7. Is there something you could replicate in your own parish?
8. Is there a temptation to choose one or two of the 'Five Marks of Mission' and ignore others?



## chapters two & three

'Peter Drucker says there are two crucial questions any organisation should ask itself. What's your business ... and ... how's business? As demonstrated, the Church of Ireland has clearly articulated what its 'business' is - it has an unambiguous apologetic for global and local mission'.

'Implementation Deficit Disorder is a term used by well-known Irish Management Consultant, Eddie Molloy. It describes the struggles that any organisation seeking to deliver on a priority can face. Identifying obstacles is not simply offering cynicism, which is as easy to do as it is de-motivating.

Entrepreneur Jerry Greenfield (Co-founder of Ben & Jerry's) says, "One of the key roles of leadership is to tell your own people the truth about the way things really are on the ground".

Naming an obstacle gives the opportunity to address it. Richard Rohr says, "I am not saying there is no place for criticism, but there is the kind that opens possibility and the kind that merely spews and increases negative energy".'

1. What are we doing well in the Church of Ireland, regarding mission, that we could do more of?
2. What caught your attention most readily in the items described in 'The Visible Iceberg'?
  - a. Describe one thing that you personally, or your parish, can do to positively change this?
3. 'Culture isn't defined by ... mission statements posted on the wall or website – it is defined by the behaviours

and principles being practiced every day ...' In what ways can organisational culture affect our ability to be effective in mission:

- a.** In our parish?
  - b.** In our dioceses?
- 4.** Is there anything in our history as a Church that makes us more risk averse?
- a.** What are the possibilities and dangers of addressing this?
- 5.** What do you think of when you think of evangelism?
- a.** What do you think is in the mind of Christ when He thinks of evangelism?
- 6.** What challenges does the Church face today when committing itself to mission?
- a.** How has the world changed for the Church in Ireland?
  - b.** What local challenges does your parish face when thinking about mission?

## chapters three, four & conclusion

'Spiritual renewal at local level has been identified as key to the mission of the Church. "We cannot give away what we do not have".<sup>21</sup>

'There are rarely 'silver bullet' solutions to any important challenge. But significant action and change is usually possible! This is no less so as the Church of Ireland works to match its apologetic for mission to reality.

The report of the Council for Mission to the 2012 General Synod suggests that the journey to effectiveness in mission by the Church of Ireland will be taken at many levels:

... there can be a leaning towards spiritual consumerism which places personal spiritual preferences above the life of the Christian community. There may also be a deep-seated desire to preserve what we have and who we are rather than face change and growth ... there is a need to exercise trust and recognize that visionaries need to be heard and their visions discerned and then acted upon. But national gatherings and voices are needed to keep the mission central and to share the stories.<sup>22</sup>

At whatever level work takes place the key processes are still diagnosis and action. As one person commented, "The commitment to execution is a spiritual issue".

1. What 3 things encourage you or give you hope regarding our ability to be effective in mission?

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21 Comment from Council for Mission Breakout Group: 2014 General Synod

22 Page 340

2. When thinking about spiritual renewal:
  - a. Describe what it might look and feel like in your own life?
  - b. Describe what it might look and feel like in your parish life?
  - c. Is there anything that disturbs you or is off-putting about the concept?
3. What 3 practical actions could your parish take to encourage spiritual renewal?
4. Put yourself in the place of being a leader in the Church and describe some of what your biggest challenges might be? How might you most helpfully respond to them?
5. What three positive changes could you make in the way you do things in your parish to make you more effective in mission?
6. What next steps are you planning to take to increase your effectiveness in mission?

*The Church of Ireland website has some very helpful resources at [www.ireland.anglican.org/parish-resources](http://www.ireland.anglican.org/parish-resources)*

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