

*Encouraging
Interest & Involvement in*
GLOBAL MISSION

A Resource Pack for
Congregational Leaders

3rd Edition
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The Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Board of Mission Overseas, Church House, Belfast BT1 6DW
Tel: +44 (0) 28 9032 2284

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Introduction

This pack has been put together for two reasons. Firstly, to help congregations form a Mission Committee, if they haven't done so already. Secondly, to assist committees that feel they need to find a new sense of direction. It's not intended to be comprehensive but seeks to stimulate ideas and encourage innovation and commitment.

Notice that there is no section entitled '*Ten Points for Prayer*'. The rest of the information in this pack should lead you into prayer. Also, specific requests for prayer change so rapidly that any information printed today is more than likely to be out of date tomorrow.

To give focus to your prayers, we recommend regular use of our weekly ***Prayerline*** bulletin, available online at www.presbyterianireland.org or, on request, by email from overseas@presbyterianireland.org.

Organisations are generally not mentioned twice. For example, if a web site is given in one place, a personal contact for the same organisation is not given elsewhere. In the limited space available, this has allowed the inclusion of more mission organisations.

You might like to add a few more '*Tens*', such as –

- Ten missionaries connected with our Congregation.
- Ten missionaries from our Presbytery.
- Ten things we did last year to support overseas missionaries.
- Ten points for prayer for each of our missionaries.
- Ten national Christians whom we pray for and support.
- Ten secular organisations in which Christians are involved overseas.

We hope this pack will be a useful resource, which will stimulate and challenge many in our Church, encouraging them to become committed to the mission of Jesus Christ worldwide.

We acknowledge with gratitude the considerable help given by Rev Drew Gibson in the original preparation of this Resource Pack.

Nigel Eves
Mission Education Officer

Ten Good Reasons!

Here is a list of ten ways in which **YOUR congregation** can benefit from having a lively **interest** and **involvement** in mission overseas.

1. More members will become active in the life of your congregation.
2. Fellowship increases, especially between older and younger members.
3. Corporate and individual prayer becomes more relevant, especially as answers to specific requests are seen.
4. Congregational generosity increases.
5. Peripheral organisations and groups can become more involved and integrated into the main stream life of the congregation.
6. Your congregation can appreciate more fully the work of Church House.
7. Ideas generated for mission support can be applied to other areas of your congregational life and witness.
8. Your fellowship with local congregations (and denominations) can be fostered and enhanced.
9. The lessons learnt from Christians overseas can be applied here at home.
10. Your members can appreciate more fully what it means to apply their faith to the everyday issues of life.

Ten Types of People for your Mission Committee

It is very important that the congregational Mission Committee has the full backing of your Minister and Kirk Session, whether it's just being set up or has been in existence for some time.

Just who and how many people should be on the Mission Committee is something that has to be worked out in each congregation (probably by the Session) but ideally it should be made up of people of different ages and sexes with differing backgrounds, skills and experiences.

Here are some of the different types of people that might be considered for inclusion in your Mission Committee –

1. One or two elders (who may fit into one of the other 'types' listed below)
2. Someone from the Presbyterian Woman's Association (PWA)
3. Someone from your Young Women's Group (YWG)
4. Someone from your Young Adults' Group, or equivalent
5. Someone from your BB, GB or Youth Group (a senior member or leader)
6. Someone connected with your Bible Class and/or Sunday School
7. Someone who is a student
8. A former missionary or someone with experience of living and working overseas
9. A member of your congregational Finance Committee or someone with a working knowledge of finance.
10. An older, retired member of your congregation with a lifetime of experience and wisdom to share

The ideal committee size is probably 6 to 8 people, but should not exceed 10 – others can always be asked to help out, if and when extra help is needed. Each member should be a committed Christian with vision and enthusiasm for the work of Christ's mission worldwide.

Ten Aims for a Mission Committee

1. To promote interest in mission overseas.
2. To further mission education among all ages and both sexes.
3. To present the challenge of commitment to service in mission overseas.
4. To relate realistically to the needs of missionaries and mission.
5. To help individuals see how to get involved in mission overseas and to provide the means and encouragement for them to do so.
6. To support missionaries from our congregation and/or Presbytery who are serving overseas with PCI or other mission agencies.
7. To develop partnership relationships with Christians and congregations in other parts of the world.
8. To keep a healthy balance of short term projects and long term commitments.
9. To introduce insights from the church worldwide into the life of our congregation.
10. To encourage the whole congregation to embrace mission as a way of life.

Ten Point Strategy for Developing Mission Support

A Planned Approach

1. **Define your overall AIM**
Know what you are trying to do.
Produce a Mission Statement.
2. **Determine RESPONSIBILITIES**
Decide who will make it happen.
Appoint a Mission Committee, if you don't have one already.
3. **Carry out appropriate RESEARCH**
Do you really know what's needed and by whom?
Check it out. There may be some surprises!
4. **Define the target NEEDS**
What needs to be done, for whom and when?
What are the priorities?
5. **Set OBJECTIVES to be reached**
Be S-M-A-R-T ! Make sure your objectives are -
Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely.
6. **Produce an action PLAN**
What's going to be done? When? For whom?
7. **Determine the RESOURCES required**
What: People, Materials, Facilities, or Finance?
8. **Implement the PLAN**
Get stuck in! Be enthusiastic! Be committed!
9. **Measure the RESULTS**
Acknowledge successes. Don't be put off by failures!
10. **REVIEW and UPDATE**
At least annually!

Ten Helpful Hints for a Mission Committee

- 1. Target the enthusiasts**
If possible, get people involved in things in which they already have an interest.
- 2. Involve the grass roots**
Every organisation in the congregation should be represented on and involved in the work of the Mission Committee; publicly recognising things that some are already doing can start the ball rolling for others.
- 3. Use sub-committees**
Groups of three or four people, focusing on a specific task (or tasks), spreads the workload equally, enabling the work to be carried out more effectively.
- 4. Don't meet too often, or too infrequently**
We suggest a quarterly meeting of the full committee with sub-committees/working groups meeting as necessary.
- 5. Be open**
Look to the rest of the congregation for ideas and look outside the congregation for extra input. Take time at committee meetings to take in new visions for mission, new opportunities for practical mission and fresh thinking about ongoing or well-established ventures. Why not get together with Mission Committees from other congregations and share ideas and resources?
- 6. Don't be afraid of failure**
It is better to try and fail than to do nothing. Remember that we can often learn more from failure than from success. We can use failure as an opportunity for mutual encouragement and as a spur to fresh thinking.

Ten Helpful Hints

... *continued*

7. **Don't depend on your Minister**
Every minister longs to see his people active in the life of the Church. No minister needs an extra meeting to attend or an extra set of responsibilities.
8. **Use fixed term membership**
People are more likely to take on new responsibilities if they know these will be for a limited time. Also, a reshuffle every two or three years allows valuable contributors to continue, and for 'dead weight' to be shed and 'new blood' to be added, without embarrassment.
9. **Produce an annual report**
This will enable you to assess what you have done and to outline your plans for the future. A report to the Church leadership and a report to the whole congregation may need to be kept separate.
10. **Be careful when handling money**
Openness and accountability are absolutely essential, especially as mission committees can become channels for quite large sums of money.

Ten Things YOU Can Do NOW!

1. Identify and publicise the work of two people from your home area who are involved in mission overseas, whom you have not previously supported.
2. Carry out a survey to find out what interest in overseas mission already exists in your congregation.
3. Start a regular five-minute overseas mission information spot in your Sunday morning service.
4. Organise a live phone link to a missionary during a Sunday morning service or on a special occasion.
5. Set up a mission bookstall and have regular book reviews.
6. Have a regular overseas mission news column in your congregational magazine or start an occasional overseas mission information leaflet for your congregation.
7. Work out how to help people going on holiday to find their nearest missionary so that they can drop in and say, 'Hello'. Make sure they check first with the missionary that it suits for them to visit.
8. Invite overseas students to lead a service and encourage families in your congregation to offer them hospitality – a meal, a day out, stay over Christmas, etc.
9. Include extracts from the Board of Mission Overseas' (BMO) weekly *Prayerline* bulletin in your congregation's printed announcements, news sheet or church magazine.
10. Organise a poetry or drawing competition for your Sunday school (done in Sunday school time), with the title '*The Missionary*'.

Ten BIG IDEAS!

Here are ten ideas that may not be practical to start straight away, but over time and with some thought and organisation could involve many more members of the congregation, and provide more focus for congregational mission support.

1. Send someone on a fact finding trip to a country in which you have a particular interest or organise a congregational holiday with the same aim.
2. Sponsor an overseas student at a Bible College.
3. Twin your congregation with a congregation in another country – ideally from a PCI partner church. Seek advice from the Mission Overseas Office or from others who've already done it.
4. Provide and maintain a car for use of missionaries on furlough.
5. Provide some accommodation that can be used by missionaries on furlough.
6. Adopt a Board of Mission Overseas (BMO) flat or house and commit the congregation to maintaining it.
7. Provide a salary for a national worker or a scholarship for a student in their home country.
8. Provide and maintain a house for a national staff member at an overseas institution.
9. Bring an overseas person to work in your congregation for a time.
10. Identify the skills, gifts training and resources that you have within your congregation and think creatively about how you could use these as part of your mission support programme.

Ten Questions to Ponder

These ten questions will help you think about the realities of the work of mission in today's world. They make good discussion starters and should 'suggest' other questions for group discussion. Some of the books listed on page 14 will help answer some questions. There are no right and wrong answers to many of the questions. You might find it useful to put some of these questions to a missionary speaker or a panel.

1. What should be our attitude to followers of other religions?
2. What is the core of the Gospel which does not change from one culture to another; and what are the non-essential beliefs and practices which we have that might change?
3. What should the relationship be between evangelism and social action such as medical, developmental or educational work?
4. How much should we cooperate in mission with members of other Christian denominations? Are there any areas of co-operation possible with non-Christians or followers of other religions? What co-operation should there be between Protestants and Roman Catholics?
5. How do I know if God is calling me to work as a cross-cultural missionary?
6. Is there a special role for women in mission (apart from mission to other women)? Can the same question be asked about men?
7. What are the arguments for and against cross-cultural missionaries sending their children to boarding schools?
8. When is it right for a missionary to withdraw from a situation, either temporarily or permanently?
9. What would be our attitude to a group of Christians from another country/culture coming to our town with 'a vision' for our area and who began to set up a new church? What can we learn from this about our attitude to mission in the developing world?
10. What do you think are the most common mistakes that missionaries make? What are the things they find most difficult?

Ten Good Books

Some of the following books are good introductions to cross-cultural mission; some are much more demanding and thought provoking. There are also other resources available from the people, organisations and web sites mentioned elsewhere in the pack. These resources include videos, slide presentations, leaflets and, of course, other books.

There is also a host of missionary biographies, available second hand for a few pence. Why not pick some up and read a chapter a day as part of your daily devotions?

Straightforward and easy to read books

'Why bother with Mission?' By Steve Gaukroger – IVP / EMA (1996)

'A Task Unfinished' By Michael Griffiths – OMF / Monarch (1996)

'I Believe in Mission' By Alistair Brown – Hodder & Stoughton (1997)

'Aid Matters' By Alec Gilmore – SCM (1998)

'Mission Today' By Graham Cheesman – QIF (1989)

More stretching books

'Christian Mission - A Case Study Approach' Alan Neely – Orbis (1995)

'The Recovery of Mission' By Vinoth Ramachandra – Paternoster (1996)

'Transforming Mission' By David Bosch – Orbis (1991)

'The Gospel in a Pluralist Society' By Lesslie Newbigin – Eerdmans (1989)

'The Biblical Foundations of Christian Mission'

By Donald Senior & Carroll Stuhlmueller – Orbis (1983)

Ten Useful Web Sites

Here are ten useful web sites to visit. Some are mission societies while others show aspects of global mission, which can be profitably explored. Most of these web sites have links to other Christian web sites, so you can easily build and expand your own list of useful sites.

1. **Presbyterian Church in Ireland – Mission Overseas**
<http://www.pcimissionoverseas.org>
2. **Belfast Bible College**
<http://www.bbc-ni.org>
3. **Bible Society in Northern Ireland** (linked to BS worldwide)
<http://www.bsni.co.uk>
4. **FEBA Radio**
<http://www.feba.org.uk>
5. **Frontiers**
<http://www.frontiers.org>
6. **Global Connections**
<http://www.globalconnections.co.uk>
7. **International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES)**
<http://www.ifesworld.org>
8. **Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF)**
<http://www.maf.org>
9. **Operation Mobilisation (OM)**
<http://www.uk.om.org>
10. **OMF International**
<http://www.omf.org/>

Ten People / Organisations to Contact

Here is a list of people who are well informed about cross-cultural mission, its theology and practice. All would be happy to talk to you and most would be happy to talk to churches or church groups, although most of them are not the sort of people to 'let sleeping dogs lie'!

1. **Nigel Eves** – Board of Mission Overseas, PCI
Tel: 028 9032 2284 Email: overseas@presbyterianireland.org
2. **Desi Maxwell** – Belfast Bible College
Tel: 028 9030 1551 Email: staff@bbc.dnet.co.uk
3. **Tony Wallace** – Africa Inland Mission
Tel: 028 9045 3497 Email: ireland@aim-eur.org
4. **Tim Magowan** – Tearfund
Tel: 028 9068 2828 Email: tim.magowan@tearfund.org
5. **Elma Currie** – Latin Link (Ireland)
Tel: 028 9045 7567 Email: ireland@latinlink.org
6. **Tony McGall** – Interserve (Ireland)
Tel: 028 9040 2211 Email: info@isire.org
7. **Stuart Hamilton** – Youth for Christ
Tel: 028 9033 2277 Email: info@yfcni.org
8. **Douglas Mark** – Open Doors
Tel: 028 7083 2805 Email: dmark@17gloucester.fsnet.co.uk
9. **John Hamilton** – Wycliffe Bible Translators
Tel: 028 9046 9905 Email: john-ruth_hamilton@wycliffe.org
10. **Roy Gamble** – Serving in Mission
Tel: 028 9045 1451 Email: roy@simireland.co.uk

Ten Pitfalls to Avoid

1. **Avoid over dependence on any one person or group**, especially the minister or PWA. Both are essential but neither should be overloaded. The congregation should not be allowed to think of overseas mission as the sole responsibility of the minister, the PWA or the Mission Committee. In other words, ensure responsibilities are shared.
2. **Avoid making commitments or promises that cannot be kept.** Don't take on too much. It's very easy to get carried away with an exciting idea only to find that things fall apart when the idea has to be put into practice. Be realistic!
3. **Don't get too far ahead of the rest of the congregation.** As many people as possible should feel 'ownership' of overseas mission interests.
4. **Don't live in the past.** Patterns of mission are constantly changing. Be open to new ways of doing things and don't be afraid to leave behind old ways that are no longer relevant.
5. **Don't be afraid to ask challenging questions** of missionaries but don't forget they are human like the rest of us and don't have all the answers.

Ten Pitfalls to Avoid

... *continued*

6. **Don't imagine that Mission is all one-way traffic.** We have much to learn from Christians overseas, so be open to hear what they have to say.
7. **Don't get stuck in a rut.** It is wise to allow the membership of a Mission Committee to change gradually so that there is a balance of older members with wise heads alongside younger people with new ideas, who are being given experience for future leadership.
8. **Avoid over-emphasising any single aspect of mission.** God works in many different ways throughout the world. It is good to be aware of the full spectrum of Mission.
9. **Don't be too Presbyterian** and acting as if no one else was doing mission. Equally don't ignore the work of mission associated with PCI's *Board of Mission Overseas* (BMO). Beware of thinking that only interdenominational mission societies are worthy of your support.
10. **Don't forget to pray regularly** for the work of mission overseas, both as a church fellowship and as individuals.

Your Notes
