

NOTES TO ACCOMPANY 2011 MISSION IRELAND POWERPOINT

Please note: these are notes to be adapted as necessary. Time your talk and amend or omit a section if necessary. Some of the script appears on the slides, so you may wish to allow time for people to read it, rather than repeat what is on the screen.

ALSO: please do emphasise the thank-you at the end and encourage people to use Prayer Focus and read the Methodist Newsletter. Its stories, biographies and articles are an excellent way of finding out what is happening in the Methodist Church.

OPENING TITLE SLIDE

SLIDE 2 Introducing the Home Mission Department The Home Mission Department has two people who work full time. The General Secretary, Rev Des Bain and Theresa Kamba who runs the office in Dublin. Tom Wilson is the voluntary treasurer and a fourth person, Alan Shiel, provides occasional help on some practical matters.

SLIDE 3 The Dept was set up to assist local Churches in their ministry and the Methodist Church in Ireland in its mission. One Methodist circuit in every six receives a grant from the Home Mission Dept purely to maintain its every-day life. In addition, Home Missions pays for University Chaplains in Belfast, Jordanstown and Dublin as well as some of the work of the Department of Youth and Children's Work. In addition to these ordinary grants, **this Mission Ireland Appeal** is launched each November to raise funds for Christian mission programmes being undertaken by Methodist Churches. This year over £180,000 will be needed. Money is only one way Home Missions helps. In addition it provides advice and encouragement to enable local Church members to become more fully involved in God's mission in Ireland. This PowerPoint tells four stories of people and places where God's love is shared.

SLIDE 4 Riversmeeting, Carrick – on – Shannon

SLIDE 5 Stephen Taylor, the Superintendent of North Connacht Circuit says: "In the last 5 years Riversmeeting has grown from a borrowed room, to a rented farm house 3 miles out in the country. When that became too small we put up a porta-cabin (The Shack) in the yard. This was fine for two years. Now we've moved into town, renting St. Mary's hall and looking for a new place to call our own.

SLIDE 6 None of the people who belong to Rivers was born Methodist. They have chosen to be Methodists. They come from different countries and bring freshness, spontaneity and informality to their lively worship and the practical outreach. In spite of having no place of their own, this congregation is deeply involved finds ways to serve the community. **Fawzieh Amiri - from Kurdistan** comes to Riversmeeting events and to Church on Sundays when she can. She is very impressed with the friendliness of the congregation.

SLIDE 7 Birinder Cchagan is one of the Church leaders.

2 years ago, she opened mums and toddlers in the hall and 10 different nationalities brought children along.

SLIDE 8 Next she and Rivers members organized an international day when each nationality brought their national dish. Noel Mills preached, they sang Jesus songs and danced.

SLIDE 9 This was County Leitrim's first international event and was such a success that the Council encouraged more and provided finance.

Doors have opened and Noel and Birinder attend Co Council meetings when asked. They seize every opportunity to tell of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Birinder says, " People are curious about the Holy Spirit, and they are seeking". As well as the Parent and toddlers and community events, there is an annual youth programme and youth camp, and in the springtime they started a thrift shop in the main street.

SLIDE 10 Stephen recalls, "Rivers Meeting has come a long, long journey. 2 years ago it was formally accepted as a Methodist Society, but for over 5 years it has been consistently supported by the Home Mission Department. It was Osmond Mulligan, who was the Treasurer in 2002, who first had a vision for a new work here in Carrick. In 2005 a Circuit Evangelist was appointed and funded for 2 years by Mission Ireland – your donations.

SLIDE 11 Noel Mills came in 2007 and has been part time on this vast Circuit which has seven Churches spread over 4 counties.

SLIDE 12 *Financial support is not all that Home Missions has provided, but advice, support and encouragement from the Officers who have come on numerous occasions to talk through some of the*

issues. The whole Methodist community in Ireland has embraced what's happening and we feel the support of people from up and down the country. That is a great encouragement. Thank-you"

TITLE SLIDE 13 The Walk to Emmaus

SLIDE 14 They come from all walks of life and all over Ireland and they say: "It's about..... It's the Walk to Emmaus.

SLIDE 15 This 72 hour retreat was developed several years ago. Since it began, over 1,000,000 people from all denominations, in many countries, have been pilgrims on a Walk.

SLIDE 16 Ruth Lee explains that every springtime we hold two in Ireland, one for men and one for women. This is led by lay people for lay people with some participation by a few ordained members. Each walk is supported by a team committed to prayer, care and sharing. It is based around the walk that two disciples had with Jesus on the evening of his resurrection. (Luke 24)

SLIDE 17 When their three days are over, many of these new friends keep meeting regularly to pray for each other and help one another play their part as fully as possible in the life of their home Church. They also become helpers and leaders in future Emmaus Walk retreats.

SLIDE 18 **Stephen Barrington** is just one of over 200 people in who have shared the Walk in Ireland since 2004. A Church leader, Stephen's faith had taken a battering when a heart attack had signaled weakened health. The Walk to Emmaus made a colossal difference to him. Today he is a key member of the Emmaus community and he continues to serve energetically in his local Church

SLIDE 19 **HMD Assistance**

SLIDE 20 TITLEFirst Step Centre Jennymount – Youth Outreach

SLIDE 21 **Catherine McCartney** was one of the first volunteers when First Step began 19 years ago. She says of that time, "There were a large number of young people totally disengaged from the normal church activities and they had absolutely no interest. We felt that we had to make contact and show them the love and concern of God.

Today we have a cafe serving excellent food and weekly, reduced price, lunches for senior citizens. There are also programs running for them and a Friendship Group as well as a mums and toddlers.

SLIDE 22 Youth Work runs 5 nights among the 11-15 age group who are without Church connection of any kind. So one challenge is finding language and ways of meeting them that are different."

Adam Lyner – is the Lead Youth Worker "5 nights a week we run projects such as Health – to look at drugs and alcohol; physical and mental health issues. There's a cross community group linking with another centre nearby; a young men's project; a young women's project; a couple of nights every week is just a drop in; and one night we spend on the street as a presence. A group from an organization called Urban Saints join us to help."

"The First Step Centre is consistently open; the programmes are regular and it's free. Young people come from anywhere and get involved. It's great to look back after a project and see the difference in the young people, what they have learnt and how they have progressed.

SLIDE 23

The main aim is helping young people to identify their real needs and help them to address them – not doing it for them. Not our solutions, theirs. They are affected by sectarianism, recreational rioting; drugs and alcohol as well mental health, self harm and suicide. We try to make a contribution towards addressing them all".

SLIDE 24

3 quotes from young guys attending First Step.

* *I'm going to the drug and alcohol course in the drop in centre. We're learning about the kinds of drugs and alcohol and learn the dangers of them and what they can do to your lives. It's helpful and it's very interesting just to show you.*

* *We're going on trips with the police to let us know more about them and to tell us don't be getting in to trouble or nothing. You get to see stuff in the police station. We go to get to know the police better.*

* *There's not much to do in Tigers Bay and it's boring. Hanging around the streets you get into trouble and just mess about. But with a centre like First Step Centre you can come off the streets and keep out of trouble.*

SLIDE 25 Catherine is keen to see First Step develop further. Their work is limited by the size of the building and the needs of this area are particularly difficult. There is no doubt that without the ongoing support of Home Missions the First Step would not be running. They provide significant contributions towards the youth worker's salary and they've given us hope and confidence to deliver more work for the future.

SLIDE 26 TITLE Back to Church Sunday 2010.

SLIDE 27 Maureen Hassard - Minister of Ballymena Methodist Church

'Back to Church is probably the largest individual invitation initiative in the world. It consists of just 9 words - "Would you like to come to Church with me?". It's about encouraging the congregation to take up that challenge. We saw it as a tool for evangelism to invite those who had never been, and prepared well for it during the summer of 2010.

SLIDE 28 We tried to make Church more welcoming and the actual service on 25th September was a relaxed family service that included everyone, especially the children.

SLIDE 29 Frances McKinney says "Back to Church Sunday for us began in May 2010 after we hosted a seminar in Ballymena on behalf of the Home Mission Department. We sowed the seed in Church services, bulletins, conversations with people, mid-week meetings. But more importantly Maureen preached it during the weeks leading up to September 25th. We were thrilled at the response— especially the way our members embraced the concept. We have approximately 30 new people attending on a regular basis.

The great thing about "Back to Church Sunday" is it gives real impetus to people who felt they can't 'do evangelism'. But they can simply invite folks to church –no strings attached.

SLIDE 30 Wilson Mills - was invited in 2010 by a nervous friend. Wilson grew up attending Church, but had several poor experiences of unfriendliness and arguing. He got fed up and hadn't been for years, until Back to Church Sunday. He says, " I got an invite from a friend and decided to come along. I wasn't sure what it was all about was happy enough to go. When I got there I really enjoyed it and after being there for a few minutes I thought "Where's this place been my whole life?" because of the few bad experiences in the past so it was very, very good to be honest.

It was very relaxed. Maureen (the minister) was fantastic. I went back and thoroughly enjoyed it so I brought my wife and children and there's been a big change in us all. This year I'm going to ask a friend.

SLIDE 31 Maureen Hassard explains that Home Missions launched this initiative and held a training seminar for the District in Ballymena. We decided it was a good tool and were glad of their support, training and the material they provided, particularly for the Sunday worship. It is a great initiative that involves the whole church family reaching into the community.

SLIDE 32 Thanks

During the last 15 years, it seems that Methodists in Ireland have become more and more aware of the variety of ways God extends his grace to the world, and of the ways we can join in.

These are just *four* stories. You will know more. The MISSION IRELAND brochure paints another four brief cameos of what some smaller Methodist congregations believe God is calling them to be and do in their home towns. Please take this home with you and sue it to pray for the people and places it describes.

There are monthly updates and stories in the Methodist Newsletter. It is one of the best value for money magazines in Europe. Prayer Focus has over 100 prayers you can use to remember your fellow members throughout Ireland. A sincere "Thank-you" to each person in every congregation for your interest, and once again for your support for Mission in Ireland.

SLIDE 33 CLOSING SLIDE