

Ministers

There is no such person as the omni-competent minister. God has made sure of that! When Jesus left his disciples, it would have been impossible for a single one to continue his ministry. SO... he gave them his spirit, TO DO IT TOGETHER!

In Ephesians (4:11) this is called the five-fold ministry of Christ. Leaders, each with a different gift, work in harmony to prepare the Church for the work of ministry to God's world.

Every leader, ordained or not, is a helper, using her/his particular gifts to prompt and enable the whole mission of God.

It is unbiblical for a local Church to become attached to one person's ministry.

'One person ministry' can seriously damage your health.

Ministers as members of a Team

The Methodist Church in Ireland wants to move towards team ministry so that the Body of Christ can be more effective in God's mission.

This does not mean an ordained person will no longer have responsibility for a particular congregation. It does mean that enabling the congregation for the work of ministry (Eph 4) will be the task of several people.

Just as a Health Care Team brings different disciplines to a health care package, yet the patient has an identified team member, so with Church ministry – each congregation will have an identified servant leader, and receive support from others.

We must be team because God, as Trinity, is team.

Remember:

- this is not about withdrawal or saving money or downsizing;
- this is about sharing with enthusiasm in God's mission;
- the Holy Spirit comes to empower people when they are together.

The Priority of MCI is to shape every Church as a body of Christ to participate in God's mission.

This means exploring new horizons when we sense God's call to do so by depending on his grace, which always goes before us.



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This leaflet is offered to members of Conference as a statement of the vision which underpins the Home Mission Forum report in the Conference 2009 Agenda. We hope you will find it helpful.

A vision for Irish Methodists

Giving together to God... **Worship**

Giving together to others... **Witness**

Giving to one another... **Wholeness**

"We know what real love is because Christ gave up his life for us. And so we also ought to give up our lives for one another."

(1 John 3:16)

Worship – giving together to God

Worship is more about who God is than about what we do.

It is affirming the worth of God who is “here and there”! Theologians describe this as God being IMMANENT (here) and TRANSCENDENT (there).

God’s immanence means that all human experience is shot through with divine presence. Our God is personal and active, whose spirit breathes on us.

God’s transcendence means God is beyond the limits of human knowledge and experience.

God is eternal and holy. The hosts of heaven bow in worship.

True worship responds to both God’s immanence and transcendence.

Intimacy and **Awe** are appropriate responses to the God who is “here and there”.

How?

Jesus said

“God is Spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

(John 4:24)

This means we need to:

- give praise – in heart and voice;
- pray – both personally and together;
- receive – forgiveness and healing;
- learn – from scripture. When we hear it as God’s Word, it touches us directly;
- respond – by dedicating our abilities, wealth and love to God;
- celebrate Holy Communion – it is the primary place of intimacy and awe where he has promised to meet us.

Worshippers should be enabled to participate in all these elements of worship.

Witness – giving others the gift of ourselves

What does it include?

- intentionally telling the message of Jesus’ love so that others become his followers;
- showing his love in acts of selfless service;
- working for the wellbeing of all people;
- caring for the earth, its people and its resources.

Why?

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. to proclaim freedom to the prisoners recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.

(Luke 4; 18-19)

The manifesto of Jesus (Luke 4; 18-19) has three elements:

- telling the story of God’s love without favouritism;
- his desire that oppression must end;
- healing with compassion;

By placing compassion in the centre, Jesus emphasises that it is central to Christian discipleship. Only a lifestyle characterised by love has authority to act for freedom or proclaim salvation.

How?

Jesus recognised the needs of the poor. He also honoured their dignity when he made sure his missionaries were dependent on those to whom they were sent for food, clothes and shelter.

(Matt 10; 10-11)

To be Christ-like, Christian mission must be humble and dependent on the generosity of those to whom it is offered.

Towards Wholeness... by giving together to one another in love

“... in Christ, we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts...”

(Romans 12; 5-6)

Being a member of the Church is belonging to a body that is designed to function

What you do matters. Others depend on it:

- preachers who elicit responses;
- quiet servers who do the right thing at the right time – often unnoticed;
- teachers who search and explain the bible;
- encouragers who say timely and helpful things;
- the hospitable and generous who answer needs spontaneously;
- leaders who organise and manage without causing rancour;
- those whose self-effacing compassion advertises the beauty of Christ.

No person is without a gift God has given

But But But... no one owns the title deeds to the Body of Christ. We must complement one another’s gifts, by worshipping, witnessing and working together.

Love is the key

“be devoted to one another with genuine affection. Honour one another above yourselves.”

(Romans 12; 10-11)

Christian worship, witness and wholeness just doesn’t work without this kind of love!