

5. A Vision for Irish Methodists

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a vision for Irish Methodists prepared for Conference 09

*this section can be downloaded from the website as a
colour leaflet at:*

<http://www.irishmethodist.org/about/vision.php>

**“Receiving from God....
we give together”**

- ❖ ***Giving together to God***
....worship

- ❖ ***Giving together to others***
....witness

- ❖ ***Giving to one another***
....wholeness

1 John 3:16 “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 our Christian brothers and sisters” (NLT)

2

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.

Worship which does not acknowledge both God’s immanence and transcendence is not true worship.

Intimacy and **AWE** are appropriate responses.

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 – instruction from scripture and hearing it as God’s Word, it can touch us directly;

respond - by the dedicating our abilities, wealth and love to God

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

Jesus commanded us to celebrate Holy Communion. It is the primary place of intimacy and awe where he has promised to meet us

3

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; (the Good Samaritan)
- ❖ working for the welfare of all people (the Innkeeper)
- ❖ 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) includes telling the story of God's love which knows no favouritism and his desire that oppression must end. At the centre is the compassionate act of healing. By placing compassion in the centre, Jesus emphasises that it is central to Christian discipleship. It is only a lifestyle characterised by love that has authority to act for freedom or proclaim salvation.

How? *To be Christ-like, Christian mission must be humble and dependent on the generosity of those to whom it is offered. Jesus recognised not only the needs of the poor but also honoured their dignity when he made sure his missionaries were dependent for food, clothes and shelter from those to whom they were sent. (Matt 10;10-11.)*

4

TOWARDS WHOLENESS. . . by giving together to one another in love

Romans 12;5-13 - very important verses for us today!

“..in Christ, we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts,” Being a *member* of the Church *is being a body part designed to function* *finger eye leg hand ear arm knee mouth hip*

What you DO matters. Others depend on it.

preachers who elicit responses

quiet servers who do the right thing at right time – often unnoticed

teachers who research 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

No one owns the title deeds to the Body of Christ

but but **BUT**we must complement one another’s gifts, by worshipping, witnessing and working together.

LOVE IS THE KEY *see verses 10 & 11*

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

CHRISTIAN WITNESS JUST DOESN’T WORK WITHOUT THIS KIND OF LOVE!

**THIS IS WHY --- WE GIVE TO ONE ANOTHER...
TO SEEK WHOLENESS**

5 **MINISTERS**

There is no such person as the omni-competent minister. God has made sure of that! It is helpful to think of the ministry of Jesus. When he 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) these are called the fivefold ministries of Christ. The reason for separate yet united ministries is to prepare the Church for the work of ministry to God's world.

Properly understood, Jesus' leadership ministry is shared. Every leader, ordained or not, is a helper, using her/his particular gifts to prompt and enable the whole mission of God.

'One person ministry' can damage the person's health. It is also spiritually unhealthy (and unbiblical!) for a local Church to become attached to one person's ministry.

MINISTERS AS MEMBERS OF A TEAM

The Methodist Church in Ireland wants to move towards team ministry to offer, more effectively, the whole counsel of God to the Body of Christ.

This would 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.

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

The priority of MCI is to shape every Church as a body of the 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