

BELFAST CENTRAL MISSION

1. Belfast Central Mission offers constant variety, interest and challenge in its work. The last year has been no exception. The foundation of the Mission's life is to be found in the worshipping and witnessing Congregations at Grosvenor Hall, Sandy Row and Springfield Road. Each has sought to be faithful to its calling. One exciting development during the year has been the increased work among children and young people in Sandy Row, carried out in partnership with the local Church of Ireland parish.

2. The ECCO Project, which aims to offer Christian care and involvement within Belfast's club scene, has now completed almost three years. In that time the range and depth of contact has developed significantly. This has led to an increased need for an alternative approach to worship for some who feel very alienated from the church and so the project has moved to a new phase. Fortnightly midweek worship, led by the ECCO team, has been greatly appreciated. The development of a website — "The Ethical Clubber"- has also extended the project's range.

3. Belfast Central Mission has a long tradition and a high reputation as a provider of residential care for young people. The past year saw some significant change in our provision as the management of Marmion Children's Home reverted to the Ulster Community and Hospital Trust. This reorganisation took place because of the Trust's desire to have control of at least some of the long-term residential provision for their area.

4. During the year we have sought to consolidate our provision of supported living houses for young people on the threshold of entry into adult life and total independence. This work, known as Anderson House, has been part of the Mission's life for ten years, and the birthday celebration offered staff and residents alike an opportunity to see the long-term value of their work.

5. The Quayside project continues to provide guidance and counselling for young people who have taken the step to independent living. It is to be hoped that a firmer funding base and more suitable premises might soon help this valuable work progress further.

6. Another significant area of the Mission's social programme is support for the elderly. Kirk House continues to be filled to capacity, with a considerable waiting list. It offers not only security and support for older people who can no longer live on their own, but is also a stimulating and enjoyable place to live.

7. Despite the success of our residential home it is likely that more and more people in our society will be encouraged to remain in their own homes, receiving care packages, for as long as possible. In the light of this trend the Mission is actively pursuing initiatives to enhance life for the elderly in the community.

8. The high regard in which the Mission's work is held may be judged, at least in part, by the increased response to its financial appeals and flag days. To all our donors, as well as to our growing army of volunteer workers, we say a very sincere 'thank you'.

9. At the same time much of the Mission's social work programme, which seeks to offer support to those who need it most, is carried through in partnership with other agencies, both statutory and voluntary. We are ever mindful of the needs of the community around

us, but also painfully aware of the limited financial resources available. If the true mark of a caring society is the way in which it provides for its most vulnerable citizens then we have some serious questions to ask.

10. Any incoming Superintendent quickly recognises his dependence on others. High tribute is therefore due to the former Superintendent. Rev. David J. Kerr, to the Social Work and Conference Centre team under the leadership of Mr. Bertie Sharpe, to all involved in the Pastoral team and to the congregations.

11. It is likely that Rev. David A. Campton will, following Conference, leave the Circuit for a new appointment. His many gifts have contributed significantly to the worship, pastoral care and mission of the Sandy Row and Springfield Road congregations. His involvement in the Forthspring cross-community project has enabled it to develop significantly and consolidate. The Mission is indebted to him.

AGENDA

1. The Conference receives the report of the Belfast Central Mission.
2. Childhaven and Craigmore Homes. The Conference adopts the report of the Belfast Central Mission concerning the Childhaven and Craigmore Homes.
3. Dates of Committee Meetings: 7th September 2004, 7th December 2004, 1st March 2005 and 7th June 2005