

NEWTOWNABBEY MISSION

106th Annual Report

1. The story of Newtownabbey Methodist Mission began in 1898 under the name of North Belfast Mission. It was 10 years after Belfast received its charter as a city. The population was growing quickly. New industries were developing. The port was expanding. In many of the poorer households the men were either unskilled labourers or unemployed. Their wives were mill workers and their wages were essential to keep the family out of the workhouse. Rev William Maguire was appointed to the Frederick Street Circuit. From the moment he arrived he was disturbed by the squalor, the poverty and the need that was evident everywhere. His loving concern for people and his efforts to relieve their distress and to improve the social conditions in which they lived earned him the title "Daddy Maguire.
2. Over the years superintendent ministers changed, local demands changed, programmes changed and in the late 1960's and the early 1970's great changes in the layout of Belfast were taking place. Families had started to move from the York Street area and many were being rehoused in Rathcoole. The Mission also relocated to Rathcoole in June 1974 and eventually changed its name to Newtownabbey Methodist Mission.
3. The Mission continues to reach out to those in need in Rathcoole and the surrounding area by providing the following services:
 - 3.1 **Hopes Shop** is the name of our charity shop. It is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings. We have a range of clothes, furniture, household items, candles, cards and much more at very reasonable prices. What is even more important, our shop staff can create relationships with people, have chats over cups of coffee, and many people come, not to purchase, but to find a sympathetic, listening ear.
 - 3.2 **Friendship Centre** meets each Wednesday and Friday. Here there is a friendly, relaxed atmosphere where people can socialise over a home cooked meal. Our ladies get involved in projects, such as the Crimea Blanket Appeal, knitting blankets for orphans in Crimea, and knitting hats for sailors coming into our ports.
 - 3.3 **Playgroup** is held each morning (term time). We have 25 children on the roll. Our staff are all fully qualified and we are affiliated to DENI, Social Services and NIPPA.
 - 3.4 **Parent and Toddler** is held each Wednesday morning from 10 am to 12 noon. It provides not only a social place where mothers and carers can come together for a friendly, relaxing chat, but also for children to get together to interact and, of course, have fun!
 - 3.5 **Christmas Programme** continues with food vouchers, fuel and new toys being distributed to families in the area.
 - 3.6 **Care Centre.** Throughout the year we work closely with Rathcoole Citizens Advice Bureau to help people in desperate need. We have many opportunities to show God's love in action as we seek to meet material and spiritual needs. We also work very

closely with Christian Guidelines to provide Marriage Preparation Courses. With the help of the Dunlewey Centre we are currently looking at ways we can increase awareness of the dangers of drug abuse and provide counselling for those who are addicted or to their families.

4. The Future. As part of our response to the Connexions Programme we are evaluating where we are now and what God wants us to be in the future, through the “Clearing our Vision” programme, facilitated by Evangelical Ministries.

5. Dunanney Centre (Rathcoole Churches’ Community Group)

5.1 The Rathcoole Churches’ Community Group, through the Dunanney Centre, aims to create and maintain a quality and safe environment where all the members of the community may come and partake in various planned activities for training, employment and educational purposes. The Centre provides the following services: Worktrack, REAP (Rathcoole Educational Advancement Project), Creche, After Schools Club, ICT Suite, Citizens Advice Bureau, Rathcoole Newpin, Newtownabbey Sure Start, North City Training, and Newpin Father’s Project.

6. Wesley Housing Association Limited

6.1 Formerly, North Belfast Mission Housing Society, the organisation was established in 1947. It is a registered Housing Association and has charitable status and operates on a Province wide basis providing accommodation and support/care for persons in need. A Committee of Management of 10 members, chaired by Mr. H. S. Hughes, governs the Association. Members, acting on a voluntary basis, provide strategic guidance and management for the Association. The day to day management of the Association is the responsibility of the Chief Executive, Mr. L. McAdams, reporting directly to the Committee of Management.

6.2 Our sheltered housing schemes at Bryans House, New Mossley, Wesley Court, Carrickfergus, Fleming House, and Stutt House, Palmerston Road, Belfast, where tenants live independently with a Warden employed to oversee their welfare and day-to-day management of the scheme.

6.3 At Palmerston Residential Home, frail elderly residents receive personal care and support in a loving, caring and dignified way. Stimulating activities are also arranged for residents.

6.4 The Staff receive appropriate training to ensure the best possible level of service and allow opportunities for personal development. The Association is also committed to maintaining its properties to the highest standards and undertakes a programme of planned maintenance each year.

6.5 The Association is also seeking to add to its property portfolio and is currently considering new developments on the former Methodist Church site at Tennent Street, Belfast, and on the Antrim Road, Belfast.

6.6 The Association has also started a programme of service reviews on all aspects of its work to ensure all services to its stakeholders are delivered in an efficient, effective manner.

6.7 The Committee of Management and staff continue to strive to provide accommodation and care of the highest standard and are grateful to all those who have

supported and encouraged our work to date and would be appreciative of on-going support for our work in the future.

AGENDA

1. The Conference receives the report.
2. Dates of Committee Meetings: 31st August 2004, 29th November 2004, 21st February 2005 and 24th May 2005.