

Mission Today & Tomorrow

Reflecting
on the Past
and the
Present.
Planning
for the
Future.

REPORT ON TWO-DAY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE,
ALL HALLOWS COLLEGE, DUBLIN ON 5 & 6 JUNE 2013



PRAYER OFFERED AT COMMENCEMENT OF THE CONFERENCE

God of all times and seasons - God of all nations, tribes and people, be with us in this space and during this time as we affirm and shape the changes in our understanding of living the gospel call.

Bless our work and dialogue as we reflect back on where we have been, and give us a steady spirit as we reassess and correct our journey forward.

Help us to reconcile all that we were in the past, and to be all that we can be for the future. Inspire us to set firm a pathway that is possible for all of us to walk together in true harmony and peace.

In knowing that you are always in our midst, O God, we are freer in our interaction, more daring in sharing our personal visions, loving in our confrontation, silent in consideration, and accepting in the choices that will lead us on our journey and intent.

In your loving presence, we meet to order ourselves anew, to consider who we are, where we stand, and where we are going and how.

God, as we commence our dialogue, inspire and guide us. Together we all say, "Amen"



Master of Ceremonies Mr Matt Moran calls the conference to order



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Introduction

An international conference entitled Mission Today & Tomorrow was held in All Hallows College in Dublin on 5 - 6 June, 2013. It was part of The Gathering 2013, and was a collaborative project involving All Hallows College, Misesan Cara, the Irish Missionary Union and Kimmage Development Studies Centre.

The objectives of the conference were:

- In acknowledging the legacy being transferred by Irish missionaries to local religious/members of congregations, to consider the issues emerging for mission in the future when the number of Irish-born missionaries ministering in the south will have declined significantly.
- To vision the role of volunteers and lay missionaries in development and in mission in the decades ahead.
- To analyse the role of faith-based values in development and in the wider social and economic process in developing nations.
- To consider the succession planning and implementation that has worked well to date, the preparations being made for further hand-over, and what additional work will be necessary to achieve effective transfer of the great Irish legacy.
- To debate the role that Ireland can play in missionary development work in the global south in future decades, and specifically should Ireland continue to regard missionary development as an integral part of the Irish aid programme.

The conference was attended by over 200 delegates from Ireland and several overseas countries. Due to space considerations and the demand for delegate places, the acceptance of bookings had to be ceased three weeks in advance of the event, which was one of the largest conferences on mission ever held in Ireland. The conference was divided into two sessions on each day with three speakers per session. After the speakers had made their presentations, delegates broke into discussion groups. Each group was lead by a facilitator. During the conference a book - *Sustainable Livelihood Approach: A Critique of Theory and Practice* - was launched.

This report on the conference summarises the key issues discussed and the learning points which emanated along with some suggestions or recommendations for further action. Apart from being

a permanent record of the event, the objective of the report is to share the outcome of the conference with the widest possible audience in the hope that it will help missionaries and their partners to plan effectively for the future in a fast changing world where mission frontiers have shifted. The organising committee expresses its appreciation to the speakers who were drawn from a number of countries, the chairpersons of the conference sessions, the facilitators of the discussion groups, the delegates, the support staff at All Hallows College, and the sponsors – Misesan Cara and the Irish Missionary Union – all of whom made the conference such a success.

The committee also thanks Ms Mags Gargan, Lifestyle Editor, The Irish Catholic newspaper who edited this report which was drafted by a working group. Members of the group, led by Mr Matt Moran, were: Sr Mary T. Barron OLA, Ms Jane Mellet, Dr Fiona Meehan, Dr Eamonn Brehony, and Sr Kathleen McGarvey OLA.

CONFERENCE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

The members of the conference organising committee were: Fr Eugene Curran CM (chairman), Ms Rita Kelly (vice chairperson), Ms Sinead O'Rourke (minutes secretary), Fr John Joe Spring, Fr Bob Whiteside, Ms Carolanne Henry and Ms Gillian O'Sullivan (co-ordinator) – representing All Hallows College, Fr Hugh McMahon (IMU), Mr Matt Moran (Misesan Cara) and Mr Paddy Reilly (Kimmage DSC). The Master of Ceremonies throughout the conference was Mr Matt Moran, and, as the delegates did so enthusiastically at the close of the conference, we wish especially to acknowledge his drive and commitment in bringing this project to fruition and fulfillment.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the conference was to debate and share information that will provide both knowledge and impetus to all congregations and lay missionary/volunteer sending organisations that will support them in their future ministry and work. From the very positive feed-back from delegates we are confident that this objective was met. We are now hopeful that its benefits will influence the future planning of these organisations in the change and transformation taking place in mission and in missionary development. It is that influence that will be the real measure of the success of the deliberations at the conference.

Fr Eugene Curran CM

Chairman, Conference Organising Committee

Editorial

Mission Today & Tomorrow was a conference that debated many of the key issues facing mission and missionary development, today and into the future, as the following chapters show.

A feature of the conference was a willingness to look at mission afresh, to see it as having to be open to all religious traditions and cultures, and admitting that all genuine religious traditions are part of the divine plan. Mission was described as a life-centred ministry which will lead to the transformation of society with an emphasis on justice and the practice of human rights where everyone can live life to the full. The significance of mission to society can only be properly understood when it is realised that the purpose of mission is transformation of the world and not the growth of the Church or the safeguarding of its interests.

Mission as an instrument of communion obliges us to be concerned with the joys, hopes, griefs and anxieties of all people, especially the poor and marginalised, and to be actively involved in trying to change their situation, and bring about peace where there is conflict. The Church of its very nature is missionary and in this context lay missionaries have a very important role to play.

A remarkable feature of this conference of Catholic missionaries was the participation of a Muslim speaker who is involved in the peace-building process along with Christians in Nigeria. The involvement of women in the peace building process was acknowledged as they are often the first teachers of children, who are the future.

The conference heard that it is not enough for missionaries today to aspire loosely to influencing significant positive change through an approach guided by and rooted in faith-based values. Rather it is crucial for them to be able to measure performance. It is essential that the aspirations and ideals be broken down into practical, understandable and attainable steps that gradually demonstrate a positive progressive movement or transformation towards the ideal.

Reaching the poor must always be the objective of missionary development although this brings significant challenges in financial viability. The 'ministry of charity' enshrined in the 2005 Papal

Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* is understood not in narrow welfare terms but rather the underlying motivation for a non-negotiable orientation of effective action in support of those who are most vulnerable. The central insight of social teaching in *Deus Caritas Est* concerns the complementary relationship between Church and state, and between charity and justice.

Catholic orders have been running hospitals and schools, and performing other essential social services since the early Middle Ages. Since 1891 the Catholic Church has issued encyclicals on social issues giving guidelines based on the gospel teachings on how Christians should respond to poverty, oppression, and injustice. This was the foundation of what we now call development. The Irish Government has stated many times that its international aid programme is grounded in the development work of our missionaries. Hence, the relationship in aid and development between the Church and State is decades old, whilst Church participation in development itself is centuries old.

It has always been the policy of Irish Aid to support missionary development work where Irish missionaries minister. This expands the reach of the Irish aid programme. That in turn helps to build Ireland's international reputation as a caring nation. Such a national reputation is good for the country as many of Ireland's international business leaders and successive presidents of our country have often noted.

There is growing worldwide support for faith-based development, and in this Ireland is a leader. Ireland provides significant funding for missionary development which Government describes as *"an integral part of the Irish aid programme"*. It recognises the role of missionaries in development through a memorandum of understanding with Misesan Cara as an intermediary agency. Minister of State, Joe Costello TD was clear about this role now and into the future when he addressed the conference. It is evident that he sees the partnership evolving further with local and indigenous missionary groups in developing countries.

Relationships in development between the Church and states have evolved over time into the present thinking and structures. The concept of partnership has grown out of these experiences. Ireland's position with Misesan Cara acting as an intermediary is not unique. The Swedish Mission Council operates broadly similar to Misesan Cara in the distribution of Swedish International Development Aid funding to missionary groups.

In the United Kingdom, the Dept for International Development (DFID) published its Faith Partnership Principles in 2012. These state that:

“Faith makes such an important contribution to development. Most people in developing countries engage in some form of spiritual practice and believe that their faith plays an important role in their lives. Faith groups can inspire confidence and trust. They are often seen as a true part of the local community and more committed to it than perhaps other groups.”

Like the Irish Government, these principles declare that:

“Faith groups are doing excellent work in providing not only humanitarian relief, but delivering health, education and other services in some of the most troubled parts of the world. They are making a real difference to countless lives.”

This acceptance of transformation is in line with that of the World Bank as set out at the Conference on Religious NGOs and Development Institutions in Oslo in April, 2005.

There is always a danger for religious groups that in collaborating with the state they run the risk of losing their autonomy. Civil society groups everywhere fight for the autonomy of civil society itself. The Busan Principles agreed in 2011 recognise the right of such groups *“to exercise their roles as independent development actors”*.

Authentic partnership means a long-term commitment to mutual objectives based on shared values, strategies and practices. The DFID partnership principles of transparency, mutual respect and understanding is a means to guide the future relationship with faith groups who play a unique role in fighting poverty and providing essential services for the poor and marginalised.

In 2003, Caritas International launched its guiding principles for partnership with state and other donor organisations. Likewise, UNAIDS published its strategic framework for ‘Partnership with Faith-based Organisations’ in 2009.

The carefully worded address of Minister Joe Costello to the conference pointed to the strategic direction that the Irish Government is pursuing with missionary groups as key actors in development. A complicating issue might be the transition in control of these groups from Irish to indigenous/locally based leadership. But

as was spoken at the conference by an African sister, whilst the nationality might be different after transition, *“the inspiring values and guiding principles of the missionary approach to development remain the same”* as during the decades when Irish-born religious created such a unique legacy in service to the poor. It is reasonable to assume that the strategic direction commenced by the Government through Irish Aid will lead to new guiding principles of partnership along the lines of international precedents.

A main point from the conference was the urgent need for congregations to build further the capacity of local missionaries in overseas mission countries so that they will be competent and confident in meeting the challenges that the future will bring, including partnership with the Irish State. The opportunities are great, but so are the responsibilities now and into the future. The conference sent out a clear message, and the strategic plan and memorandum of understanding since agreed between Misean Cara and Irish Aid sets out a guided pathway to support congregations in planning for succession and managing their future development interventions; that meet good international standards, that are aligned with gospel values for the transformation of society, with an emphasis on justice and the practice of human rights and the fullness of life for all.

INVITATION TO YOU

The conference organising committee, the sponsors and the speakers who shared so much experience and ideas in their inspiring but challenging presentations, invite you to study this report carefully. In particular, they ask you to discuss and to share its contents throughout your organisation, including with members and partners in the mission fields.

We recommend to you the full texts of the presentations at the conference which are available to download from the following websites: www.allhallows.ie, www.miseancara.ie, www.imu.ie, and www.kimmagedsc.ie. Audio versions of them are available to purchase in CD format from Eist Audio Productions at eist@eircom.net or www.eist.ie.

Mags Gargan
Editor

Chapter 1: Setting the Tone of the Discussion

SPEAKERS

1. Dr Patrick McDevitt, President, All Hallows College
 2. Fr Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator SJ, Provincial, East African Province of the Jesuits
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CHAIRMAN

Mr Matt Moran, Chairman of Misean Cara

ADDRESS OF WELCOME

Dr McDevitt in welcoming delegates to All Hallows reminded them that a core principle of the ministry of Irish missionaries over many decades has been participation in the life of their adopted communities in far distant lands, and their living in solidarity with the poor and the marginalised in those communities. He pointed out that participation, solidarity and subsidiarity are fundamental principles of Catholic social teaching.

He said participation is defined in Catholic social doctrine as when each 'citizen, either as an individual or in association with others, whether directly or through representation, contributes to the cultural, economic, political and social life of the civil community to which he or she belongs. Participation is a duty to be fulfilled consciously by all, with responsibility and with a view to the common good'.

Solidarity is much more than a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of other people, whether near or far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good. That is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.

He noted that subsidiarity is much talked about in political terms within the European Union, but not so much in the world of development. Subsidiarity means that matters ought to be handled and decisions should be taken at a local level if possible, rather than by central higher authority. What is not credited is that the term - derived from the Latin word *subsidiarius* - originated from Catholic social thought.



Dr Patrick McDevitt welcoming delegates

Over the decades, Irish missionaries have ministered in solidarity within the principle of subsidiarity as they lived out the Gospel of Jesus Christ and put Catholic social teaching into action in so many ways, particularly in education and in health services. The deeply Catholic values of justice, respect, compassion, commitment, and integrity enshrined in missionary development are gospel values that all Christians hold dear in their faith.

Dr McDevitt stressed that one of the certainties of life and society today is change, and that the missionary endeavour is no different. The locus of energy and growth in the Catholic faith has shifted in many ways from Western European culture to places that were once considered developing countries. This growing resource and potential for renewal of the Faith is increasingly evident within the life of the Church. For example, many countries in Africa are improving economically. The number of Catholics increased there by 4.3% last year whilst the number of seminarians increased by 31% on the previous year. In Asia, the increase in seminarians was slightly less at 29%. Likewise, Africa is witnessing an increase in female religious. This change in the frontiers of mission territory was taken up by the next speaker.

OPENING ADDRESS

In the opening address to the conference, Fr Orobator spoke about the historical role that Ireland has

played in mission and missionary development, the transformation that is taking place with fewer Irish-born missionaries serving in developing countries and his vision of the future for missionaries and what role Ireland might play in that future.

“Wherever you look,” he said, “in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, South America and the West Indies, Irish missionaries – sisters, priests, brothers, lay volunteers and lay missionaries – have bestrode the globe like the Shakespearean colossus as vanguards of the Good News of Jesus Christ”.

He suggested an important consideration for setting the Irish missionary enterprise in the wider historical context of Africa and the world. In some parts of Africa, the advent of Christianity is almost always associated with the establishment of western colonial political hegemony and economic exploitation. However, unlike the French, English, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, Belgian and Italian missionaries, the Irish had the unique distinction of not fronting the hegemonic agenda of a colonising power. Although former President Mary McAleese famously eulogised them as “unpaid ambassadors” of Ireland, they avoided overt political and economic interests that so often cast missionary endeavours in the shadow of an ambiguous adventure.

HISTORICAL FEATURES

Fr Orobator told delegates that to understand the transitions in the Irish missionary enterprise and attempt to imagine its future, it is important to take stock of some of its features. He then highlighted the following five defining historical characteristics that may permit a coherent understanding, without claiming that they are the only valid ones.

1. By all account, Ireland’s brand of missionary Christianity was an example of inclusive ecclesial mission in terms of its composition. The missionary caravan of priests, sisters and brothers came from various and diverse religious congregations, but it also included diocesan priests, members of societies of apostolic life and a significant number of lay people.
2. It emerged from and was motivated by a global vision of Church. Long before Karl Rahner proposed the notion of “world Church” as the new paradigm of post-Vatican II ecclesiology, the Irish missionary enterprise already prefigured the

notion and phenomenon of globalisation.

3. It focused on real needs. Missionary activity covered a vast spectrum of development initiatives. He characterised the Irish approach as developmental evangelisation. It is debatable to what extent aspects of Irish history, particularly the denial of education to the people until the mid-19th Century, the unjust system of land tenure and the Great Famine, strongly influenced the integration of practical aspects of development, notably education, healthcare, and agricultural and rural development, into missionary activity.
4. Women played a vital role in the missionary economy. Ubiquitous and heroic communities of women religious and members of societies of apostolic life defied unimaginable odds to establish and manage educational and healthcare institutions in several parts of sub-Saharan Africa, while providing pastoral support in parishes and remote out-stations.
5. Lastly, it was in solidarity with the local Irish Church. In this sense and literally, the laity was its backbone. Some members of the audience would still recall accounts of missionary exploits carefully and faithfully recorded and disseminated via missionary magazines and those collection boxes strategically located in parishes and village shops. These activities generated pride and sustained a strong support in the local Irish Church for the work of missionaries. Understandably, Irish missionaries replicated a familiar model of church with a predilection for church attendance, devotional practices and pietistic worship.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Fr Orobator posed the question: “Is there a way of integrating the past with the present or making sense of the state of contemporary mission in Ireland?” In attempting to answer that question, he said that, generally speaking, there is a consensus of views that paints a gloomy picture of the matter. In many people’s mind the Irish missionary juggernaut has run its course and is out of steam. In erstwhile mission territories, Irish missionary presence has contracted to a handful of older Irish-born missionaries with only minimal replenishment from the Irish-based missionary congregations. Within Ireland, the irresistible Tsunami of secularisation erodes the capacity of traditional Catholic culture hitherto considered as the primary transmitter of faith. The

dwindling missionary capital of the Church in Ireland lies beyond doubt. The question is: Is Ireland ready to harvest the fruits of its missionary labours on its own soil or will the Church simply opt to bear the burden of diminishment with resentment and nostalgia?



Srs Angela Lyapa, Joanne Bierl and Ekaete Ekop,
Medical Missionaries of Mary

FUTURE PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION

Fr Orobator went on to suggest the following four areas where he believes that mission made in Ireland retains an ongoing relevance:

1. Although the landscape has changed drastically, there is need to revive and sustain the twin missionary strategies of education and health as catalysts of integral human development and social transformation. These two delineate critical areas of partnership and solidarity in mission.
2. An emerging area of missionary involvement is advocacy and networking. Although it falls on local religious personnel to take the lead in promoting reconciliation, justice, peace, gender empowerment, ecological integrity, fair trade, etc., religious communities in Europe seem well placed to initiate networks of global advocacy that target the remote causes and political interests at the root of the socio-economic and political malaise in some parts of the developing world. New technologies of virtual communication and social media offer effective platforms for advocacy and networking on issues of shared interest between the Church in the global north and the Church in the global south.
3. The future of mission in the world Church depends on a radical openness to lay participation and leadership. The Irish missionary enterprise has a unique distinction of promoting lay

participation in mission. At present the role of lay volunteers and partners who desire to serve abroad is emblematic of a residual and resilient missionary spirit in Ireland. In support of this view Fr Orobator pointed out how his Jesuit province of Eastern Africa has benefited immensely from such new models of gospel-inspired and lay-led mission and service. This secularisation of missionary activity parallels in some respects the secularisation of society in Ireland, but it neither diminishes nor extenuates the passion to take the Gospel abroad.

4. Theorists of religion tell us that contemporary Europe at best represents a “post-missionary,” “post-Christian,” and “post-modern” reality; at worst, it is trapped in an irreversible trajectory of decline and decay. Fr Orobator offered another explanation as possible, namely that the present situation constitutes a stage in the missionary life cycle that flourishes and ebbs through a series of transitions. Properly conceived, mission does not terminate with the departure of the missionary to a vaguely remembered homeland recently fallen prey to marauding secularising forces and a Church besmirched by sex abuse scandals. On the contrary, mission progresses to a new stage with the coming of age of mission territories and assumption of responsibility for the mission of the Church by local personnel. Significant demographic shifts in Christianity places the Church in the global south on an axis of growth. For such former mission territories, Ireland, as well as the rest of Europe, now represents a new mission frontier in the world Church.

NEW MISSION FRONTIERS

Expanding on this, he said that in practical terms, this new partnership for mission in the world Church places on the Church in the global south the duty of offering suitably qualified personnel and human resources to the Church in Ireland as well as the responsibility of learning to live in and adapt to an unfamiliar culture, just as Irish missionaries did in former foreign missions. This partnership raises two complementary and critical challenges which he described thus:

1. It is imperative to rethink the efficacy of aid as a developmental tool because, after decades of transfer of vast monetary aid, human and socio-economic development remains but a fraction

of what it should be in the global south. The question arises: besides aid, are there other means of assisting other Churches that prioritise solidarity, partnership and mutuality in mission? For this partnership to succeed, the agenda of development ought not to be decided unilaterally and foisted on the local population, rather, it should be the outcome of dialogue, discernment and mutual exchange to meet the greatest needs here or abroad.

2. Although in the past, the Irish missionary enterprise did not fly the banner of Ireland's overseas political agenda, present-day mission has become increasingly dependent on the financial support of the Government channeled through organisations such as Mísean Cara. In this arrangement, it is worth confronting neuralgic issues in sexual ethics that continually test the compatibility of purposes between Irish Government aid and faith-based development and mission agenda.

CONCLUSION

Fr Orobator said that at the 2009 African Synod, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI spoke of Africa's spiritual potential with the words: *"Africa constitutes an immense spiritual 'lung' for a humanity that appears to be in a crisis of faith and hope."*

That description expresses an implicit belief in the potential of the religious fortunes of Africa to rejuvenate a Church in crisis. He expressed his belief that Benedict's pulmonary metaphor offers a vital lesson for Ireland. For several centuries successive generations of courageous women and men sailed from the shores of Ireland to various parts of the world as ambassadors of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but now the Church in Ireland urgently needs the resuscitating breath of the Church in the south in order to survive and grow.

The support of the Irish people for the endeavours of their missionaries was emphasised in Fr Orobator's comment on Irish mission *"being in solidarity with the local Irish Church"*. The Minister of State also pointed out later how "the Irish people have a great sense of pride in our long history of missionary work and what it has brought to poor communities all over the world". In declaring that "we must continue to communicate to the Irish public about the impact of our work" in development, the Minister was seeking a continuation of 'solidarity with the Irish people', and he invited missionaries to actively participate in that communication process.

DISCUSSION GROUPS

In the discussion groups, delegates made the following points:

1. Radical openness to lay participation in Ireland and abroad is needed. Any global vision of Church must empower laity in Ireland and overseas.
2. There is a challenge to the south as missionaries to the north. How can the Church in the south help the Church in the north?
3. Partnership is the future of mission. It is interfaith, ecumenical and inclusive (women, men, priests, religious, and laity).
4. Mission in Ireland needs to celebrate the past with gratitude and learn from it, just as we consider the present and future challenges and opportunities. It should be 'mission yesterday, today and tomorrow'.
5. Development and evangelisation are two key components of mission that need to be held in a healthy balance. Just as development should be life and people centred, faith is also a priority. We should not create a false dichotomy between mission and development.
6. What missionaries have been doing well all along is holistic development. Mission is about inclusivity and empowerment.
7. Ireland is a new focus of mission: this opens up exciting possibilities locally and internationally.

LEARNING POINTS

- The locus of energy and growth in the Catholic faith has shifted and mission frontiers in the world Church have moved. Ireland, as well as the rest of Europe, now represents a new mission frontier.
- An emerging area of missionary involvement is advocacy and networking. New technologies of virtual communication and social media offer effective platforms for the future.
- The future of mission in the world Church depends on a radical openness to lay participation and leadership.
- The agenda of development ought not to be decided unilaterally and foisted on the local population; rather, it should be the outcome of dialogue, discernment and mutual exchange for meeting greatest needs.
- The need to continually test the compatibility of purposes between public funding and faith-based development and mission agenda in the area of sexual ethics.

Chapter 2: Interpreting Mission Today and into the Future. The Impact of Culture.

SPEAKER

Fr Joseph Kavunkal SVD, lecturer and author

CHAIRMAN

Mr Paddy Reilly, Executive Director, Kimmage Development Studies Centre

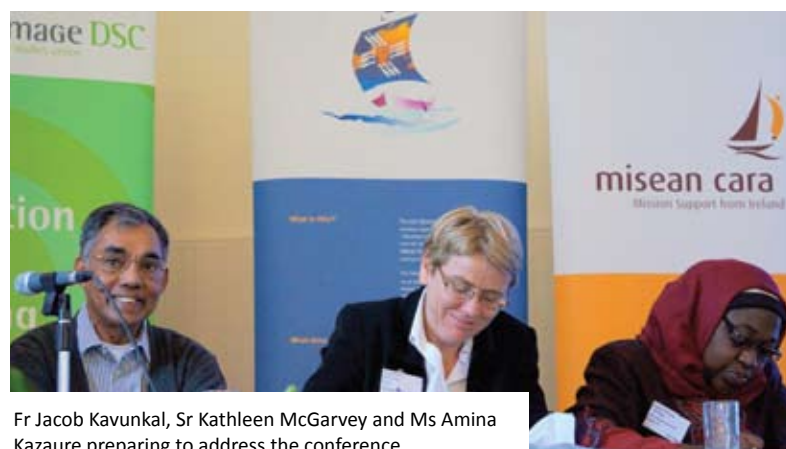
INTRODUCTION

Fr Kavunkal drew inspiration from his own experiences of Irish missionaries in Asia/India when speaking on the impact of culture and interpreting mission today and into the future. He expressed his gratitude to all the Irish missionaries, both men and women, for the immense good they have done in different parts of the world through their initiatives in education, health care, as well as through the many welfare services for mitigating suffering and exclusion.

CONTEMPLATIVE DIMENSION

Fr Kavunkal noted that mission in Asia must take into account the rich and varied forms of prayer and mysticism enshrined in the Asian philosophical and theological systems. He stressed that we should never deny the God-experience of others. God is beyond the range of human concepts and categories, “beyond all being and knowledge” (St Augustine). We must be infinitely humble, rather than arrogantly holding that only our understanding of God is the right one and it is the exhaustive understanding of God!

He noted that like other missionaries, the Irish missionaries too went out to save the non-Christians. Today we have to use a language that is more familiar to the people and less offensive to them and in conformity with the Bible. The language of Jesus’



Fr Jacob Kavunkal, Sr Kathleen McGarvey and Ms Amina Kazaure preparing to address the conference

mission is good news to the poor, sight to the blind, freedom to the oppressed, and as the acceptable year of the Lord (Lk 4:18-19). It was a celebration of life, to have it to the full, already now and transform the world so that it sustains life in its fullness, for individuals, for societies and for creation. In fact Jesus made that as the defining characteristic of his mission.

Jesus uses the language of Jubilee, the restoration of all things, the freeing of all those who are oppressed and enslaved. Jesus restored the human dignity of the poor and his respect for human dignity is manifested also in table fellowship with the excluded of society. It is sad that even today this aspect of the Eucharist is not perceived by many.

MISSION TODAY

Fr Kavunkal stressed that to be a Christian is a call to follow Jesus in his mission. Vatican II placed mission at the core of the Church by saying that it is missionary by its very nature (AG 2; LG 2-5). The theme of mission comes through every conciliar document. Every Christian is called to share the mission of reaching out

to their neighbour with radical love and service, and thus sacramentalising the love of God made present in Jesus Christ. While all religions believe in God, Christianity tells how the way to God is through one's neighbour.

Contrary to the common presumption of the God of sending, what we have in the Bible is a God of constant reaching out. Though we have instances of God's calling and sending, they are all manifestation of the God whose narrative is: "I have seen their affliction, I have heard their cry" (Ex 3:7). The biblical narratives of creation, covenants, sending of prophets and the sending of God's Word Incarnate, are the spelling out of this divine-self reaching out to the poor, to the afflicted, to the marginalised, Jesus manifests God (Jn 12:45; 14:9). Thus, God is mission, self-reaching out. Mission is the ecstasy of God! Vatican II expressed this in terms of God being a "fount-like love" (AG 2).

LIFE-CENTRED MINISTRY

Fr Kavunkal referred to the changing cultural context which is teeming with "death-dealing forces, such as violence, war, or utter selfishness, especially in Asia". Mission's response to this must be life-centered ministry. More than 40% of Asians are excluded from a life style that is consonant with human dignity. God's concern for the wholeness of life for all that was manifested in Jesus Christ, has to be continued

through the work of the community of his disciples. The expression of it, the ways in which we seek to have it and nourish it, naturally, will depend on the context.

Such a life-centered service will lead to the transformation of the civil society with the emphasis on justice and the practice of human rights. The Church is for the sake of the world, to be at its service.

The significance of mission to civil society can be understood only when we realise that the purpose of mission is transformation of the world and not the growth of the Church or the safeguarding of its interests. Jesus' mission was not a self-proclamation or the expansion of his own interests. Today mission is not primarily a question of the growth of the Church or its wellbeing, but that of God's interest for the world (LG 1). The Church is important, not for its own sake, but for the sake of God's reaching out to the world.

In sharp contrast to the existing hopelessness and alienation, Christians can reach out to others with genuine hospitality, reminding all of God's own hospitality for all. Christian hospitality can prove to be a harbinger of hope especially when it is extended to situations of homelessness, rejection, those seeking refuge and so on. Christian hospitality has to be extended even to the unborn through our pro-life movements.

Concentrating on the message



PEACE AND JUSTICE

Speaking on peace, Fr Kavunkal noted that there cannot be genuine peace without justice. In the Bible justice precedes peace: peace to the people of good will! Christian mission has to be at the forefront of creating a just society where each can live with God-given dignity, where his/her rights are accepted and respected.

The focal point of the early Christian self-understanding was a relationship, and not any rite or book. It was a relationship based on the experience of God's presence in and among them and through one another. This relationship Jesus described in the Gospels as a wedding feast. For the Semitics, as for Asians, especially in those days, wedding was a time when close and distant relations gathered together for celebration for several days. This in turn, challenges us to a series of relationships of concentric circles, with deeper understanding and cooperation for the realisation of the divine reign.

ROLE OF WOMEN

Fr Kavunkal noted how women in Asia, as elsewhere, are victims of the patriarchal paradigms, imposed marginality and invisibility. They are the poorest of the poor in Asia. The world continues on a path of patriarchal domination. Christian mission is not only liberating women from patriarchal structures in general but also within the Christian society and structures. Our advocacy can create the necessary changes to usher in a social order that will accord respect and dignity to women.

In the Acts of the Apostles we do come across women not just auxiliaries, "but as prominent leaders and missionaries who – in their own right – toiled for the gospel". The experience of God's gracious goodness in the life and ministry of Jesus must enable the Church to radical openness that does not allow room for any member to feel marginalised or excluded.

Referring to youth, Fr Kavunkal said that youth everywhere experience a feeling of uncertainty and distress in their search for meaning. He asked, "Are we prepared to walk with them as the Lord accompanied the dejected disciples at Emmaus?" We need to learn to understand young people, their language and culture, or else we stand in danger of losing future generations.

Most Irish missionaries are not ignorant of St Patrick's temper that could flare dangerously when he perceived an injustice. An acceptable expression against this outrage today is advocacy against injustice. Local, national and international advocacy is recognised as a major part of mission today - advocacy on behalf of people on the margins, victims denied their rights, the subaltern people - as it leads to an experience of the divine reign.

Fr Kavunkal concluded by stressing that we need more than ever what Pope John XIII outlined in his inaugural address to Vatican II, become ourselves ever fitted to announce the Gospel to the culture of our times. This requires that we be open to the signs of the times. We cannot hide behind the façade of grandiose theological claims. Mission is a celebration of life for all.

DISCUSSION GROUPS

In the discussion groups, delegates made the following points:

1. Mission is pitching our tent amongst people – we come to God through our neighbour.
2. Interfaith dialogue is crucial. Partnership is the future of mission, interfaith, ecumenical and inclusive (women and men, priests, religious and lay). We need to learn from each other. Delegates expressed an appreciation for the emphasis on 'prophetic contemplation', on peace being divine, and the richness to be found in the different world religions.
3. Mission is not about converting one another to our belief systems. All beliefs are part of one God. We do not have a monopoly on who God is. All genuine religious traditions are part of the divine plan.
4. Delegates felt that the speaker was realistic in terms of the strengths and weakness of Irish missionary movement.
5. Mission needs to understand the basic needs of people by paying attention to culture and listening to the wisdom of other faiths.
6. Mission must be life-centered and out-reaching. Jesus saw his mission as 'good news to the poor' – not on the far side of the grave but on this side, and not for short-term respite from poverty but 'reversing the situations of the poor'. Not charity, but transformation of the world into a world that is just. It should evangelise politics and economics as a way of dealing with issues related to conflict and the promotion of peace.

7. Delegates liked the phrase “Divine Hospitality” as attention to the well-being of humanity. Engaging with the shared needs of humanity and ‘making the Messiah present,’ is radically different from making everyone Catholic.
8. The language of salvation is changing – we are constantly moving in our understanding. Even to say “they have the Gospel” is slightly paternalistic and condescending. God has saved the world – all of us.
9. Need to tease out the relationships between faith, mission and development.
10. Patriarchy is a big issue. The early Church shows us that women were not auxiliaries but prominent leaders in their own right.

LEARNING POINTS

- In the light of the ministry of Jesus we have to re-write our missionary purposes as full human life for all on earth with all its glory and dignity. By this we would include not only ecology but also the transcendental dimension of human life that is integral to the dignity and rights of human persons.
- Every Christian is called to share the mission of reaching out to their neighbour with radical love and service.
- Our theological discussions and reflections are

not to be confined to theological schools and universities but must influence the decision making bodies in public life, such as city councils and board rooms.

- The Church must become a roadmap for the people of our times in their journey through life.
- Today we need to develop what the Australians call, a “postal-code theology” that responds to specific localities and pastoral situations which in turn can meld into a missional conversation, positioning the local within the range of glocal and global dynamics. We cannot have a ‘one size that fits for all’ model.
- We must realise the need to accept mission from the periphery. Mission in the apostolic times was a movement from the periphery. We could speak of the need to have an exodus from the centres of power to the insignificant people who do not count for much, an exodus from self-centeredness to other-centeredness.
- We have to guard against providing answers which are irrelevant to the youth. We must be capable of deciphering their ‘emotional alphabet’.
- Inter-religious dialogue for us is an important expression and integral part of mission as it leads to the realisation of the Kingdom, in collaboration with the followers of other religious traditions.
- The Gospel cannot exist independently of embodied contexts

Mr John Shiels with Br John Guinane, Br Barry Noel and Mr Joseph Mugasa



Chapter 3: The Role of Lay Missionaries / Volunteers in Mission and in Development

SPEAKER

Jane Mellett, parish pastoral worker in the Archdiocese of Dublin and returned volunteer with the Salesian congregation in India.

CHAIRPERSON

Ms Marian Harkin MEP

INTRODUCTION

Ireland has played an historical role in mission and development worldwide. We are living in changing times and there is now a huge transformation taking place with fewer Irish-born missionaries serving abroad, fewer vocations to religious life and the ageing demographic of Irish missionaries still working on the ground in so-called developing countries. The question arises: what role do lay missionaries have to play in mission and development? What is a lay missionary?

Ms Mellett acknowledged the problematic terminology around the phrase 'lay missionary'. She referred to a recent 'think in' organised by Irish Missionary Union and Viatores Christi around the future direction of lay mission. A statement from that think-in reads:

"Who are we as lay people serving mission? We are an integral part of the Irish Church, called and sent to live Gospel values by the witness of our life and our service in areas of need. We express these values through our work and our lives. We are invited to live lives of global solidarity. We share the earth with all its inhabitants and we respect the integrity of creation. 'We are called to be agents of change. We are not here to conquer the world but to illuminate it – new sight, salt of the earth, light of the world' (Br Philip Pinto CFC)." (Irish Missionary Union 2013)

How is this different from an NGO volunteer or development worker? Does it simply come down to motivations and Gospel based values? Ms Mellett spoke about her own experience of mission in the Salesian province of Bangalore to explore these issues.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Ms Mellett acknowledged the motivations of many lay missionaries are a desire to serve, a sense of adventure, altruism and enhancing career prospects. There can be the added motivation of wanting to have a faith based experience, witnessing to Gospel values and a desire to live out faith in a religious community.

She has ongoing involvement in mission in India through the sending organisation of the Salesians (SAVIO). The emphasis in the Salesian lay mission experience was being sent out as learners and guests to host communities with clear aims and objectives to placements. Ms Mellett spoke of her experience in a Salesian project in Karnataka which focused on the rehabilitation of ex-child labourers /street children (see www.breadsbangalore.org). She also referred to the role of the lay missionaries on return to their home country giving examples of initiatives that they have been involved with.

KEY AREAS

Ms Mellett highlighted four key areas that lay missionaries can make significant contributions to in the future when they are given an appropriate skill base and empowerment:

(a) Skills transfer

Why is a lay missionary in another country? What have they got to offer that locals cannot do? The reality for many communities in rural areas are that skill deficits still exist and there is role for lay volunteers

in mentoring local religious/trainers/Irish religious. While this may be perceived as top down, religious congregations can focus on identifying key areas that need attention on the ground and seeking volunteers who can offer their abilities e.g. training for special needs teachers; child protection policies or self-assessment tools etc. For many organisations today, such as Progressio, Volunteer Missionary Movement (VMM), and so on, lay missionaries are recruited to specific placements that will strengthen local partner capacity, knowledge and skills, allowing them to be more effective in tackling poverty locally.

(b) Development education & advocacy

A returned lay missionary is an extremely useful resource as they are often highly motivated and passionate about their experience. However, they are often not utilised to their full potential on return.

Lay missionaries have the potential to promote support for aid, international solidarity and maintain international links. Returned lay missionaries can highlight pressing issues of gender, child labour, economic and social inequality and call on government, businesses and civil society to act.

Lay missionaries have a huge role to play in being the link, the face of a project advocating support in Ireland for local partners. They can also serve as important reservoirs of knowledge, which then strengthens development programmes by gathering accurate information about on-the-ground conditions. This can strengthen accountability for public funding to projects.

(c) A pedagogy of the non-oppressed

Referring to research completed in 2010 as part of the MA programme in Kimmage DSC on 'Host Community Perceptions of Volunteers,' Ms Mellett acknowledged the huge emphasis placed by the host communities on the effect of the missionary experience on the volunteer. A change in the perspectives and day-to day behaviour of lay missionaries, due to new awareness or understanding about a particular situation, is linked to a call for a "pedagogy of the non-oppressed" (Chambers, 2005).

Conscientisation is not enough – lay missionary movements have a responsibility to their volunteers on placement and on return to ensure that their role is nourished, supported and directed in some way. If this happens, the lay missionary becomes a huge asset to the mission experience and to the congregation.

(d) The role of laity in mission at home and abroad

Co-responsibility - it is not just because of the falling numbers joining religious life that lay people suddenly have a role to play, they have a role to play because of their baptism. We know that mission is changing, that Ireland is now mission territory also. Ms Mellett asked how many of our lay missionaries are being encouraged and guided into lobbying action, preaching in parishes and development education at all levels? It is through such initiatives that the local Church in Ireland will also benefit and rediscover its purpose in this world – transformation, right relationships and real communion.

"Pastoral ministry should always be missionary and its ministers must be courageous. A Church that does not go out of itself, sooner or later, sickens from the stale air of closed rooms"

(Pope Francis, April 2013).

It is not only our politicians who need lobbying, lay missionaries have a role to play here calling out to those in the pews and the sacristies that the Kingdom of God is not just a nice story we hear about on a Sunday, we are meant to be active in eradicating poverty in all its forms across the world and promoting peace and justice (Luke 4:16-18). Then perhaps, through that witness of the Gospel, some of the life will be poured back into our local Church.



Ms Jane Mellett listens to a question

DISCUSSION BY DELEGATES

Delegates were very exercised in the group discussions about the role of lay missionaries. Some of their comments were:

1. In the terminology, laity should not be defined negatively but as 'all members of the baptised community'.
2. The IMU statement of identity could also be useful for lay pastoral work in the Irish Church.
3. There is importance in lay missionaries transmitting the message in Ireland about what is happening in the developing world. In sharing their experiences, lay missionaries may be helping the faith of those they talk to.
4. The value of 'presence' with people on the ground - the phrase 'wasting time with the young and the poor, is not wasting time', summed up how we are to be present with people.
5. There is a need to be clear on the role of lay missionaries/volunteers – not to be a burden on host group. Orientation is essential and religious communities must have appropriate structures to facilitate volunteers.
6. The effect on the lay missionaries of working in developing countries in the sense of faith development and conscientisation.
7. The importance of the returned lay missionaries in engaging with the public and enhancing public awareness and support for projects abroad.
8. Touched by the presentation and the experience of going out – twofold role and then the ongoing role on return. Not just a role in development education but also in faith formation.
9. There is value in lay missionaries to carry flame forward. Learn the charism of the congregation in sharing skills and what they bring back. Lay missionaries are revitalising the Church.
10. Lay missionaries are an 'integral' part of the Irish Church. Leadership must come from within the Irish Church if it is to be 'missionary'.
11. Collaboration is so important. Role is more than about channelling aid. There is need for a structure in order to collaborate better.
2. Sending programmes should have clear aims and objectives.
3. Sending organisations should sign up to a Code of Conduct such as that offered by Comhlámh and use the support and training available from Comhlámh to enhance the skills of those involved in training and support for volunteers.
4. A relationship of equality should be aimed for between the sending organisation, the volunteer and the host community. No one of these three should be exploited. The Comhlámh Code of Conduct aims to achieve this relationship.
5. Sending programmes should offer ongoing resources and support to volunteers before, during and after placements so that they have opportunities to reflect at each stage of their missionary experience. This should include adult faith development and a focus on remaining involved in justice and peace issues.
6. Returned lay missionaries can offer huge support in terms of capacity development to congregations at home in Ireland. Skill deficits exist in Ireland when it comes to applications for funding, professional monitoring and evaluation etc. If congregations are willing to invest in their lay missionaries, all can benefit in the long-term.
7. Given the number of religious sending organisations, delegates felt that there could be an umbrella organisation for lay missionaries. It is very disparate at present.

CONCLUSION

Good development work needs values, alliances, counterparts, fellowship, sisterhood, solidarity and straight forward international co-operation across the board. The role of the lay missionary will play an integral part in this if volunteer sending programmes utilise the lay missionary as a valuable resource. There is a huge opportunity to build links with new leaders in developing countries through lay missionaries so that new leaders can continue to benefit from the supports previously received by Irish missionaries. Ms Mellet finished with the following quote highlighting the necessary collaboration which will be needed between lay/religious/north/south/east/west to perpetuate the legacy of Irish mission and missionary development into the future:

"If you've come to help me, you're wasting your time... but if you've come because your liberation is bound with mine, then let us go together."

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Sending organisations of religious congregations should have in place responsible volunteer programmes which offer professional training and support to those going on mission, regardless of the length of placement.

Chapter 4: The Growing Need to Replace Conflict with Peace

SPEAKERS

1. Sr Kathleen McGarvey OLA, Lecturer, and Director of the Women's Interfaith Council, Kaduna, Nigeria
2. Ms Hajiya Amina Kazaure, Muslim Coordinator, Women's Interfaith Council, Kaduna, Nigeria

CHAIRMAN

Mr Paddy Reilly, Executive Director, Kimmage Development Studies Centre

INTRODUCTION

Interfaith and intercultural dialogue is not an option but a necessary part of any mission today. The Church must give priority in its missionary endeavours to situations of conflict so as to be an agent of peace and of communion. This important issue was looked at by Sr Kathleen McGarvey OLA and Hajiya Amina Kazaure, both working in Kaduna, Nigeria as General and Muslim Coordinators of the Interfaith Forum of Muslim and Christian Women's Association.

Conflict cannot be replaced; it can be managed. It can be managed negatively (through violence in one form or another) or positively, transformed into something life giving, such as peace.

Peace is not the absence of conflict or of war. According to Cardinal Francis Arinze, by and large peace is *"that situation of justice and rightly ordered social relations that is marked by respect for the rights of others, that provides favourable conditions for integral human growth, and that allows citizens to live out their lives to the full in calm and joyful development"*.

Development is an inherent part of our mission as Church, sent to be a sign and an instrument of Communion, concerned for the joys, hopes, grief and anxieties of all people (Gaudium et Spes 1), especially

the poor and those in underdeveloped countries, and to be actively involved in changing this situation. However, our mission as Church cannot be reduced to development as though mission and development were synonymous.

Working for peace is an inherent part of mission. Again, peace and development are not synonymous but they are certainly very much related: people will not and cannot live in peace unless there are the basic indices of development. As Paul VI said in *Populorum Progressio* (n.27), "Development is another name for peace". Equally we might say underdevelopment is another name for conflict.

As a committed Muslim, Ms Kazaure believes wholeheartedly that Islam is basically a religion of peace, compassion and justice. In the Qur'an, it is stated clearly: *"And the slaves of the Most Beneficent (Allah) are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the foolish address them (with bad words) they say: Peace (on you)!" (25:63).*

Religion is so often embroiled in today's conflicts. This is because religion is a factor that is close to people's hearts and, thus, while it has the potential to be a moral authority, a prophetic voice, a conscientious and organised instrument of positive change, it can be and is so easily manipulated for evil. Because religion is a strong factor in so much of the conflict experienced today, religion must be part of the transformation process. Due to this fact and to the closely intertwined relationship between mission, development, conflict and peace, interreligious dialogue is a necessary path of mission today. Dialogue is not only called for by the Church (*Nostra Aetate*) but also has solid foundations in Islam: *"O people of earlier scripture! Let us reason together that we worship none but Allah and we associate nothing with Allah and that we do not set up from among ourselves Lords other than Allah" (Q 3:64).*

According to Sr McGarvey, a missionary is a person automatically associated with a religion, and hence is involved in the conflict whether they like it or not. They must either promote prejudices against other religious groups, or be passive and say nothing either for or against (but silence is often the greatest violence), or promote openness and forgiveness. Better the latter: to be involved as one promoting reconciliation, dialogue and peace.

CAUSES

The struggles most African countries are going through today of inter-ethnic wars, broken democracies, poverty, are not at all unrelated to the sad history of the 'Scramble for Africa', slavery and colonialism. Today's neo-colonialism by way of loans, trade agreements, and so on, continues to enslave the continent.

Internal corruption and greed especially among the elite and the leadership in today's post colonial African nations are also responsible for the conflicts. Among the more immediate causes of the conflict are a variety of factors that tend to differ in emphasis from one situation to another. These generally include economic issues, resource-related conflicts, unequal access to political power and position among ethnic groups, the feeling of marginalisation.... Due to overlap of ethnic identities with religion, as often happens, the conflict finds expression in religion. Issues are viewed from the prism of a perceived religious divide. Religion becomes the instrument of offence and defence, and a tool in the hands of those who utilise it to manipulate the consciousness of the people.

Other issues contribute to the intolerance and religiously framed conflict witnessed in some communities:

1. Lack of proper knowledge and understanding of religion by some of those who represent Islam or Christianity.
2. Extremism, fanaticism and bigotry by some religious leaders, preachers, teachers and a significant number of followers.
3. Lack of sincerity of purpose and fear of God by those who use religion as a vehicle to amass wealth and/or attract followers and other worldly gains.

CHALLENGES

One of the major challenges in working for peace in northern Nigeria, and which according to Sr McGarvey holds true for any conflict situation where religion is a major factor, is the whole politicisation of religion in the complexities of the issues. Religion has a negative as well as a positive potential in society. In itself it is a social, historical and hence also political construct. The political manipulations of religion in many conflicts, for economic and political gains, are very intricate. Hence, a major challenge for today's missionary, and even for Western development agencies which today prefer to abandon religion, is to become somewhat more streetwise and politically astute, remain above the superficial prejudices and stereotypes, stay firm in the belief in the transforming power of religion, and help others to do the same.

The scramble for Africa and the colonial enterprise were not done in God's name but certainly God's name and the superiority of Christianity were recruited into its service. Hence, according to Sr McGarvey, we have a moral responsibility to ensure that today we as Church, as missionaries, do not contribute in any way to more abuse or domination. This should not result in our being afraid to speak in God's name. Nor should it result in missionaries abandoning the wider notion of evangelisation in favour of development. Rather, it obliges us to do mission in a way that is consistent with respect for the people within their culture and their religion.



Sr Kathleen McGarvey addressing the conference

The weight of our past, and the association of the Western world with Christianity even today, is such that Muslims find it hard to believe that Christianity is a peaceful religion, a religion of morality and of right and just relations. Of course, if we consider it a matter for competition, we can say the same about Islam. This demands self-examination and hence, as a missionary Church, we have a responsibility to give evermore authentic witness to love, openness, peace and non-violence if we are to redeem our name.

Another challenge in the area of peacebuilding is to find ways of developing an understanding of the role of religion in a democratic state. Given that religion is so much a part of everyday life in Africa, much discussion must be held so as to find the practical and acceptable way in which all religious adherents are given an equal playing field in all parts of the country and the state ensures as 'referee not patron' that the religious freedom of all citizens is respected.

A major challenge in working in the field of dialogue and peacebuilding is that peacebuilding has become an industry, as some NGOs, governments and many others use it as a means to gain material benefit or public applaud. To promote a volunteer and community approach to peacebuilding is necessary as, according to Sr McGarvey, it is only through sacrifice that peace will eventually reign.

WOMEN'S ROLE

Women's poverty and vulnerability in many societies is greater than that of men, due in great part to a patriarchal culture. Women's voices and their concerns are often times excluded from Government programmes of response and of mediation in times of conflict and in efforts at reconciliation and peacebuilding. Women are excluded from the mainline decision making levels in religious bodies, both Christian and Muslim, as well as prominent interfaith councils and state-sponsored religious bureaus. When interfaith events are organised, especially when it is by government or by influential circles, it is the male religious and community leaders who are invited. Hence, in work with women and for women in peacebuilding, serious obstacles due to patriarchy are encountered.

Ms Kazaure said it is very important that women are involved in and contribute to the peace building process, because *"women are the first teachers for everybody and to a large extent they are the model in the home"*.

FEAR

Many Muslims and Christians do not sincerely believe that dialogue does not mean compromising one's religious values or beliefs. Many people look suspiciously at those who promote interfaith work and fear that they have been bought over and are trying to mislead them. They also fear that if it is tied to development work which is funded by a Western aid agency, that it is a compromise from which it will be difficult to disengage.

Ms Kazaure suggested that more "community buy-in" was needed. *"Where there are people of two faiths in a community, it is important to ensure that it is done as an interfaith project and that both the Muslims and Christians are taken along because we have differences in our denominational beliefs and if we are not given a sense of belonging, there will be mistrust which will lead to the collapse of the whole concept."*

People doubt the sincerity of interfaith work due to the recurrence of the so-called 'religious crisis' that has become the order of the day in many parts of the world. The issue of Islamically framed terrorism (such as Boko Haram in Nigeria) has further escalated the apprehension and distrust. Although Boko Haram has been loudly criticised by many Islamic leaders and scholars in Nigeria, they have created an avenue whereby many Christians see any Muslim as a Boko Haram supporter or a potential terrorist.

LEARNING POINTS

1. Peace building has become an industry; Communication and authentic witness are necessary in conflict transformation.
2. In our mission it is important that we promote education for religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue.
3. In all our missionary projects we need to seek to understand the basic needs of the local people by paying attention to their cultures and listening to the wisdom of their faiths.
4. New models and paradigms of mission and of religion are necessary such as learning to recognise and overcome our stereotypes about people of other faiths, especially Muslims, and learning to participate with deep respect in shared conversations, which are of dialogue not of monologue and which promote mutual understanding and unity across borders of difference.
5. Given the close relationship of peace and conflict,

of mission and development, and of religion and politics, it is important that as missionaries we become somewhat more streetwise.

6. Working with creation is also peace building, and gives room for common goals.
7. We cannot claim ownership of God.
8. Mission is about inclusivity and empowerment.
9. We need to tease out the role of religion in a modern democracy.
10. Sometimes silence is the greatest violence.
11. We must learn to welcome the lived experiences and wisdom from other places as we learn to respect our new pluralisms and diversities.
12. Mission must be carried out with real respect for all cultural, religious and ethnic diversities.
13. Social and economic development, justice and the alleviation of poverty, meaningful security - none of these is possible without peace.
14. A great challenge for all people of faith is the fact that religion is implicated in conflicts all over the world. This is not the fault of religion per se but with what, throughout history and until this very moment, has been done with religion - the politicisation and manipulation of religion. God's name has been and is easily associated with guns. As a result, it is difficult for Muslims to believe Christianity is a religion of peace, and vice versa. This challenges us to examine our prejudices and also to ensure we make a conscientious effort to redeem our religion by being actively engaged as instruments of peace and non-violence.
15. Inter-faith dialogue is not an option: mission must be done in a way that is consistent with respect for the people within their culture and their religion. This means change in our missionary approach because many people of other faiths believe from experience that Christian mission seeks only to convert to Christianity.

16. We are challenged to examine our past missionary methods and examine whether and how we might have promoted a Church that is arrogant in its own sense of theological and institutional superiority, is sacramentalised and out of touch with the everyday affairs of society, lacks respect for human diversity, and turns a blind eye to general lack of social responsibility within the Christian community.
17. Christian churches as well as Islam have nourished patriarchy. It is imperative that women of faith work together to promote peace and justice for all.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Overcome the bad reputation of religion: Religion has a bad reputation in relation to war and peace. However, religion has been a positive source of hope, strength and inspiration for people to challenge and non-violently confront situations and structures of injustice; religion is a teacher of positive human values; and religion is for many people and in many societies a moral authority of peaceful, just and right human relations. Missionaries have a responsibility to ensure religion is taught and practiced as a positive and not a negative force. Religion has an equally bad, if not worse, reputation in relation to patriarchy and to gender inequality and this reputation applies to all religions. Because religion is such an influential factor in women's recognised roles and rights in most developing societies, our involvement in gender-focused theological discourse and our support of that within the various religions is a necessary engagement in our mission for peace.
2. A critical look at our methodology of mission: We are encouraged to look back critically at the methods of the past: did we promote an attitude



Ms Sally Roddy, Viatores Christi poses a question



Ms Amina Kazaure delivers her address

of inter-ethnic and interreligious openness and dialogue; did we help establish a Church that is arrogant in its own sense of theological and institutional superiority; did we form Catholics who are committed to social responsibility: did we bring a Catholicism that sufficiently dialogues with the local culture and customs? Can we, with the benefit of hindsight, ensure that in our various ways of outreach to the local church, including through the training we give to personnel from the young Churches, a sincere analysis of these questions is included.

3. Be prepared to fund faith communities: Continue to support faith bodies which are working on the development of projects that people in their local areas, from their faith and cultural perspectives, envision together. There is more chance of success at the grassroots, certainly in the area of women's promotion, if development and empowerment projects are done through faith based organisations which are trusted by the religious and community leaders, than through other conduits.
4. International lobbying: Irish missionaries still have great authority through lobbying efforts in the UN and other international political and legislative arenas, and are to be very much commended and supported in this work. The more international pressure for accountable leadership, transparent elections, gender equality, non-violent options; the more chance there is that things will change.

5. Formation of personnel from the young Churches: In forming personnel from the young Churches, it is important to form them in a way that teaches them to search for answers in dialogue with the cultures and religions which shape their society and our world at large and to thus be able to bring reconciliation and peace to their lands (cf. *Africae Munus* 88). Some basic training in political analysis is also necessary as people study religions and the challenge of co-existence. The formation we give today should also encourage a critical study of past and present missionary methods in Africa.

CONCLUSION

The Lineamenta for the African Synod, n. 35 stated: "No nation can prosper in an atmosphere of insecurity. No meaningful development is sustainable in a society replete with mutual rancor, bitterness and hate. Mutual prejudices hinder cooperation and exchange, and rob a people of a hope of a great nation." *Africae Munus* states: "*If all of us who believe in God desire to promote reconciliation, justice and peace, we must work together to banish every form of discrimination, intolerance and religious fundamentalism*" (94). Peace is Divine, we must Preach and Practice it, so that the world can be a better place for all.

Delegates listening to the speakers



Chapter 5: Faith Based Values in Development

SPEAKERS

1. Sr Patricia Murray IBVM, Director of Solidarity with South Sudan
2. Ms Eilish Dillon, Co-Ordinator of the MA Programme, Kimmage Development Studies Centre
3. Sr Geraldine Henry DC, Mission Development Co-Ordinator, Daughters of Charity, Province of Ireland

CHAIRMAN

Mr Joe Humphreys, Assistant News Editor, Irish Times, and author of *God's Entrepreneurs*

INTRODUCTION

In session two of the conference, the speakers addressed the question:

“What role do faith based values play in the development process and in wider social and economic change in developing countries?”

This topic is of particular importance for missionaries today for many reasons. Within the scope of this report three significant reasons will be highlighted: in the first instance, reflecting on the role of ‘faith based’ values in the development process enables missionaries, as faith based organisations (FBOs), to articulate more clearly what (if anything) is distinctive about their approach to development and to influencing change in the social and economic contexts in the countries in which they work. Using values as a reference point is familiar territory for missionaries but significantly this language is also increasingly recognised, understood and utilised within the development sector. Having the capacity to articulate what is distinctive about a missionary approach has implications in the competitive funding environment where missionaries are competing with other development organisations for limited resources.

Many authors suggest there is a perception that FBOs have certain distinctive characteristics, even comparative advantages over not only state organisations but also secular NGOs in the

development process. These comparative advantages include having the capacity to “draw on spiritual and moral values and have influence in institutions that inculcate values and govern behaviour”. It is crucial for missionaries today to be aware of the role that faith based values play in development in order to optimise the positive and minimise the negative impact the interpretation or application of these values may have.



Chairman, Mr Joe Humphreys with speakers Sr Geraldine Henry, Ms Eilish Dillon and Sr Pat Murray

It must be acknowledged that the distinctiveness of FBOs can often be described in a negative light where a fundamentalist interpretation and application of faith based values can be divisive, exclusive and at its most extreme, destructive. Therefore, the second reason why this is an important topic for missionaries today relates to the fact that in reality faith based values can be harnessed in ways that can lead to either positive or negative changes in societies. A critical analysis of the role of these values ensures missionaries are better equipped to promote and influence a positive application of faith based values, thus impacting positively on social and economic development in societies in which they work.

In any context, the language of values can be viewed as aspirational or idealistic, a point that leads to the third reason why it is important for missionaries to engage with this particular question today. Critically analysing the role of faith based values can provide missionaries with a starting point to analyse their own performance in relation to meeting the aspirations or ideals rooted in the values that guide their

commitment to influencing change in the lives of those whom they serve in the developing world. It is not enough for the missionary today to aspire loosely to influencing significant positive change through an approach guided by and rooted in faith based values. Rather it is crucial in our missionary contexts today to be able to measure performance. It is crucial that the aspirations and ideals be broken down into practical, understandable and attainable steps that gradually demonstrate a positive progressive movement towards the ideal. This can only be achieved through sincere reflection on this question which will facilitate:

- an increased understanding of what it means to translate the language of values to practical reality at the grass-roots level;
- an honest assessment of current performance; and
- an awareness of how to harness the positives, identify gaps and build capacity to gradually improve performance.

KEY ISSUES

Each of the three speakers approached the question from a different perspective:

Sr Pat Murray IBVM, recounting her personal witness of the Solidarity with South Sudan Project, outlined from her experience what she considers some key values necessary for mission today. In brief these include solidarity, respect, option for the poor, reconciliation and healing, as well as peace-building. It is beyond the scope of this summary to elaborate on how Sr Murray interprets these values in the light of her experience in South Sudan. However, readers who are interested in learning more can refer to the full text of her presentation which is available with all the conference papers on the websites listed in the editorial pages of this report.

An important aspect highlighted in this presentation and commented on in various breakout groups, is the extra impetus faith gives to values. The place of grace and belief cannot be underestimated and this awareness of grace permeates the entire missionary culture. So for example, while there is recognition that reconciliation and healing is a process, grace is a necessary condition if progress is to be made.

Similarly the exercise of solidarity in the faith context “is an imperative that flows from the very nature of

God – a God who is in communion”. Respect is due to each and every person because of the inherent dignity of the human person – made in the image and likeness of God. This respect for dignity is expressed in so many ways; in affording a listening stance to each person and community; to developing genuine mutual relationships and exercising mutuality in setting the agenda for development. Respect for dignity has to be core to development.

It is worth highlighting the importance Sr Murray placed on listening in the context of the South Sudan story - as a lesson for all of us engaged in missionary development processes today. There were many dimensions to this listening, many of which were commented on by delegates. It was not just listening in order to know what direction to focus the particular project. But the very act of listening contributed to healing in the lives of the people.

Delegates considered the South Sudan story to be ‘a good news’ story with many very important lessons to be learned for mission today and into the future. These included the need to listen to the local community, the model of collaboration used both among religious organisations and with the government, and the time-bound focus of the initiative.

In what was perhaps the most challenging of the three presentations from a missionary perspective, Ms Eilish Dillon approached the topic from a more theoretical standpoint. She ‘interrogated’ faith based values suggesting that they are neither inherently good nor bad but can be used both positively and negatively in the development process. Just as models of development need to be critiqued, so too do the values inherent in missionary development. By so doing, we can come to a clearer awareness of what these values say about us, about others, about inclusion and exclusion, and about our understanding of transformational change.

Taking the Irish public as an example, it was suggested that we can be proud of our heritage in reaching out to others in need and we share common values such as compassion, solidarity and a sense of justice. However, these values also sit side-by-side with a healthy dollop of self-interest! This is particularly evident in the link between aid and trade in the recently launched new Irish Aid Policy for International Development, One World, One Future.



The missionary approach to development gets attention from the panel

Delegates had varying views on this aid/trade link with some suggesting that just as 'evangelisation' might have been the motivating self-interest which sent missionaries far and wide from the island of Ireland, albeit with positive results in the area of development, perhaps trade is the motivating self-interest in our modern day which compels us as a nation to continue to provide significant levels of overseas aid, in the hope that stronger trade links will be developed which will ultimately be to our benefit. Other delegates reported however, that a trade link may be preferable for many countries as it is more likely to result in a mutual partnership rather than in the imbalance of power that the aid relationship can beget.

A further issue highlighted by Ms Dillon (whose full presentation is on the websites mentioned earlier) was the possibility that engaging in the provision of services or care based on charity - traditionally important aspects of missionary development work - can sometimes be to the detriment of questioning the structures of injustices that perpetuate the poverty. Delegates acknowledged the need to be more proactive in counteracting injustices but also highlighted the ongoing importance of providing services.

Sr Geraldine Henry DC presented a Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) for use in assessing the extent to which five key values are addressed in missionary development work: Justice, Respect, Integrity, Compassion and Commitment. An outline was provided of the process used to develop the tool which took place over a period of 18 months and involved at various stages members of Misean Cara staff, board, liaison officers and a development consultant working together to develop a common articulation of a Missionary Approach to Development (MAD). The first stage resulted in a document outlining the five core values in

the MAD as stated above. With regard to each value, various standards and criteria were agreed.

The next stage involved the development of the Self-Assessment Tool and was guided by Cathy Doran, a development consultant. It involved further input from a group of liaison officers with the assistance of Dr Lara Allen, Head of Information in Misean Cara. Developing the tool was an attempt to move from the theory of the original document to a practical tool that could provide missionaries with a means of assessing their own performance in relation to the core values, either at project, area or organisational level. This could help identify gaps in capacity and assist with identifying training needs. At various stages during the development of the tool, it was piloted in different countries and the feedback integrated into the finalised tool.

Generally there was positive appreciation of the Self-Assessment Tool with particular acknowledgement for its qualitative focus. Delegates were impressed with the process that had been used to develop the tool and recognised that it calls us to focus on the practical side – not just on theory. It also facilitates an honest examination of 'consciousness' or of existing practices. Some delegates queried when the self-assessment should actually take place and noted it would be useful for collecting baseline data when planning a project and as a monitoring tool as the project progresses.

While some found the tool to be practical and useful, others considered it might become just another extra demand to be met when seeking funds from Misean Cara. There was also a suggestion by some delegates that the process used in developing the tool may be described as a 'top-down' model and queried how practical it may be at the grassroots level.



Sr Pat Murray addresses the conference

LEARNING POINTS

Solidarity

True solidarity highlights the importance of listening and responding out of that listening. In order to listen and effectively respond, it is crucial that we recognise and trust the real experts to know what is best for their own future development. We must be prepared to really listen to local communities as they identify their problems and seek their own solutions. Projects should then be built around these solutions determined by local communities. “To say that a person feels listened to means a lot more than just their ideas get heard. It’s a sign of respect. It makes people feel valued.” (Deborah Tannen)

Therefore mutual relationships rooted in trust are vitally important and questions must always be asked regarding whose reality actually counts and whose agenda is being met in any missionary endeavor. Mutuality must exist right along the aid chain – relationships of trust also need to exist between the donors and recipients so that genuine mutual learning can be facilitated.

When relationships of trust are established, so much can be achieved.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world: indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”

(Margaret Mead)

We must always be cognisant of the fact that development must be holistic and not just a particular dimension of a person or society. However, some delegates queried whether we are really using a holistic approach – is there a space for finding new unity, how do we address cosmology within the whole development process? In discussing ‘faith based’ values, are we locked into old dichotomies of faith-based organisations?

Option for the poor

Undoubtedly mission today and tomorrow desires to live out a radical commitment to the marginalised and most vulnerable. While the long-term commitment to walking with the poor is a laudable value, there is a risk that this can also lead to co-dependency. There is a challenge for missionaries to continue to engage in the provision of basic services where needed, but also to challenge and influence transformational change. Perhaps a greater engagement in advocacy is called for to challenge inequalities and root causes of poverty. Delegates acknowledged that while we can all say we live an option for the poor, the SAT challenges us to show how we are radically living this option.

Values

All the values mentioned throughout the various presentations are in fact basic human values, thus people of faith do not have a monopoly on these values. However, it is perhaps true to say that for missionaries, faith is the motivating factor that compels us to work towards an ever greater living out of these values. We must therefore be courageous enough to ask ourselves the tough questions and really interrogate our values and their impact and influence.



Ms Eilish Dillon speaking to the delegates

Language

There was concern expressed that language becomes devoid of meaning when specific terminology becomes 'fashionable' within a sector. While it is important and significant that the language of values occupies a central space now within the development sector, care must be taken that we define what we mean by the values we claim to enshrine – that they don't become warm, fuzzy, feel-good terms, but actually can be translated and understood in very practical and understandable ways.

Sharing the Good News

Delegates expressed concern that the rich missionary heritage is not being adequately recognised primarily because of the lack of documentation and a reluctance to promote missionary work. There was an appreciation of the need to share the story and to publicise good news stories in order to bring the positive and ongoing contribution of missionaries to public awareness. This is urgent in an environment where we are competing for a share of tax-payers contributions. However it was also recognised that there is not a culture of promotion among missionaries. This was particularly evident when people expressed 'gratitude' rather than 'pride' when looking back at their rich missionary heritage, an aspect some delegates described as a 'defining feature' of missionaries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Attention to training

The 'what and how' of training and capacity building going forward must be participatory. The SAT has to be adapted to need and must be accompanied: it should not just be distributed to congregations and volunteer/lay missionary sending organisations but should be accompanied by training and explanation. New things take time and commitment and if this tool is to be effective, it will require both time and commitment.

Sharing missionary story

Greater efforts should be made to encourage congregations and lay missionary/volunteer sending organisations to engage more actively in bringing their missionary development work to public prominence in Ireland.

Mutual learning

Missionary groups have a long, historical, rich legacy of experience and reflection in working towards positive change in communities. Development agencies also have so much to offer from their wealth of experience, research and reflection. There is need to ensure a greater commitment to mutual learning for the benefit of all.



Sr Geraldine Henry speaking

Chapter 6: Succession in Mission and its Associated Challenges and Opportunities

SPEAKERS

1. Dr Eamonn Brehony, Development Consultant
 2. Sr Pereka Nyirenda, Leadership Team, Religious Sisters of Charity
 3. Sr Clare Stanley, Assistant Superior General, Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny
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CHAIRWOMAN

Mrs Nora Owen, Chairwoman of the Irish Aid Expert Advisory Group

INTRODUCTION

There are many types of succession. In the context of this session of the conference, succession refers to the handover process that is taking place in mission territories where the missionaries from the North are handing over to their local counterparts in the South. One discussion group referred to succession as ‘the legacy we leave behind as missionaries’.

There was an acknowledgement both from presenters and in group discussions of the huge experience missionaries have in managing succession – much of it has been very successful but not all. They prepared local missionaries, identified those with potential, gave them training, developed their capacity, gave them responsibility and helped them to get on with it. This was particularly true of schools and health facilities, many of which are thriving under local leadership today. It was also acknowledged in discussions that insights into succession are still evolving.

Sr Nyirenda pointed out that one’s approach to succession is influenced by the approach one takes to development. Three of the most common models are:

- An extractionist model - where people are basically drawn into implementing pre-determined development plans that have been drawn up by the expert. Everything is top down.
- Benefit or hand-out induced model - characterised by the delivery of knowledge and resources from outside the community e.g. individual person led projects which take off because the person driving the project has the financial resources to make it happen. Both these types of approaches pose a great challenge, both in terms of sustainability of the initiative and the problems they pose for the person who has to take over.
- Active and authentic participative model – seeks to empower the powerless towards assuming full responsibility over their own destiny within the framework of their cultural and socio-economic realities. This model is characterised by capacity building efforts among the beneficiaries and that this will serve to contribute to the sustainability of development benefits beyond the period of external intervention.

Dr Brehony pointed out that succession is a sensitive issue, because it brings to the fore the issue of retirement and for many people their identity is tied up with their work. For example many missionaries have received great recognition and honorary titles for their missionary work but when they come back to their country of origin they are nobody.

Irrespective of whatever model one works out of or the sensitivity of the issue, succession offers both challenges and opportunities.

CHALLENGES

A major challenge elaborated on by Dr Brehony is the fact that succession brings fear to the fore – fear of one's own future work and role in the congregation, and the future of the work/project – how will it be after handover. In relation to the first fear; succession brings forward the question 'what do I do next'. 'Do I stay on and if so what will I do' or 'do I go back to my country of origin and if so what will I do'. These are difficult questions. However this can also be a major opportunity where many missionaries have been able to convert this major threat into a great opportunity by taking on new ministries. The second fear relates to 'what will happen to the future of the work being handed over'. Will the work continue and will it serve the needs of the poor? Will the person/institution taking over be able to manage?

Sr Stanley spoke of a second major challenge which was also picked up in group discussions as the challenge posed in relation to ownership of institutions. Some congregations happily built schools, dispensaries, and other institutions without putting in place the necessary structures, especially legal structures. This was particularly so where these institutions were built on land which belonged to dioceses. Contracts with dioceses were often vague.

Today, some congregations have major challenges as bishops claim that these properties belong to their dioceses, although initiated by a missionary congregation. This is especially so where female congregations are managing institutions which have been handed over. In many instances indigenous sisters have little or no say in institutions where they have laboured over the years, and which their congregations believed they were bequeathing to them.

In group discussions it emerged that there is a perceived power imbalance between expatriate religious sisters and indigenous sisters even from the same congregation. One expression of this power imbalance is the respect bishops accorded to expatriate sisters which is not always accorded to local sisters reflecting local attitudes to women within these cultures. This is leading indigenous religious sisters to own institutions – schools and health centres - as well as becoming more independent through more professional qualifications.



Time for a break - Sr Pereka with Sr Scholastica Nganda of the Sisters of Mercy

In the past it was felt congregations did not have enough vision or in some cases there was a lack of sufficient laws to register their African provinces as charities or legal entities in order to have some independence. Nowadays, congregations are talking about registering as legal entities.

Dr Brehony noted a third major challenge as how to balance the need to be self-sustaining and at the same time to serve the needs of the poor. Many missionaries from the Northern hemisphere fear that, once handed over, the project/institution will serve only the needs and interests of better off members of society in order to be sustainable – an issue that was re-enforced in group discussion when participants wondered if “the poor will become the victims of the focus on sustainability”.

On the other hand religious workers from the Southern hemisphere will say that even the poor are not so poor and they can afford to pay for services rendered if not the full amount at least something. In some cultures, anything that is 100% free is suspect! They also do not have the same access to funds as their missionary predecessors had. However the problem is that when money becomes the overriding concern, there is a temptation to direct services towards the rich. Leadership has a key role here to help us keep our focus on the poor while at the same time trying to be as self-sustaining as possible.

Sr Nyirenda highlighted a fourth major challenge as ensuring that the charism and cherished values of the congregation are carried into the future. It is important that the congregation/group taking over has imbibed the spirit or charism underlying a project. A key question one needs to ask is 'Am I handing over a charism or a project'. For example I can hand over the charism and values of working with widows and orphans who have been marginalised and then it is up to the congregation or group taking over to decide how to do this work in the light of the charism. Or I can hand over a project working with widows and orphans and the expectation is that the congregation/group taking over will continue doing the work as it had been done in the past.

Many leaders believe that if one can sustain the charism and values of the congregation and its ministries then other aspects of sustainability, especially financial sustainability, will fall into place. They argue that many congregations started with little or no financial responses but what sustained them and helped them to grow was the commitment to the charism. Trust is fundamental to the succession process – we must trust those taking over that they will continue the charism or project into the future. However charism cannot be handed over over-night. There is need for planning and training to ensure that the charism and values are fully imbibed especially by local staff who have a key role in ensuring the continuation of the charism.

Other challenges include:

- The need for indigenous members of local congregations to own policies and structures that have been put in place: Sr Stanley stated that in many situations, the rush to put structures in place sometimes sent the message that “well, we did not need structures but you do”. Local people drew the obvious conclusion: “we are not trusted”. As one sister said: “The time for some system of accountability and transparency to be put in place is not when an African sister would be ready to take charge of the ministry.” In group discussion it was noted that when one is late putting such systems in place, e.g. at the time of handover, one can be perceived as a ‘control freak’ and ‘colonialist’ especially when it relates to financial accountability.
- The need for departing missionaries to let go: Some missionaries hold on too long and find

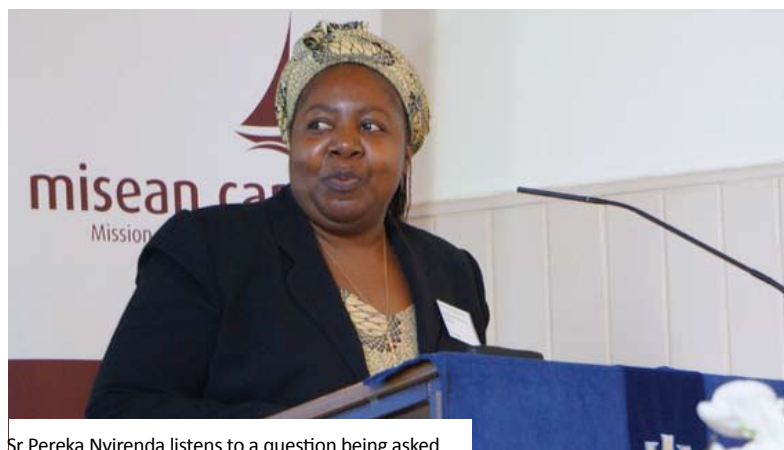
it very difficult to move into a supporting role even when it is clear that it is time to move on. In most cases it was simply the human fear of letting go but it created the perception that “you do not want to hand over because you do not trust me”. In some situations there is continued interference by those who have left the project. Some missionaries become ‘back seat drivers’ even though they have returned home!

OPPORTUNITIES

According to Dr Brehony, one opportunity is to make succession part of our ongoing work. Good succession needs good planning over a period of time both in terms of who will take over and how it will be done. One needs to ask oneself: ‘how long will I go on doing this work before handing over responsibility to indigenous religious?’ As with project planning, one ought to start succession planning from the time one hopes to handover the institution or project and plan backwards.

Medical Missionaries of Mary (MMM) in a ‘lesson learned’ from succession identified early planning as a critical factor in succession. Many of their projects belong to another party, mostly dioceses, and they manage the health unit or project on behalf of the diocese. They discovered that the best approach to use is called the 3D approach – discern, discuss and decide.

From group discussions and based on the experience of MMM it is important to ensure sufficient funding for at least one year post-handover if not longer, so that the receiving congregation can get themselves established and get on top of the project without having to worry too much about funding at an early stage.



Sr Pereka Nyirenda listens to a question being asked

There is a need to identify the right people to take over and if needs be, train them adequately for their role. In group discussions it was noted that the issue of succession has implications for initial and ongoing formation of missionaries. It was felt that congregations need to instill in missionaries an attitude of avoiding the 'my project syndrome' and the need to 'work myself out of a job', as well as acknowledging that things will be done differently when someone else takes over. There is also need to teach necessary skills in planning especially 'exit strategy planning'.

Another opportunity is to build solidarity among a range of actors. Good networking is one component of solidarity. There is an African proverb:

"If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go with others."

By networking with the Irish Government, missionaries have left a huge legacy in Africa having offered years of service in healthcare and education (Dept of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2011).



Sr Clare Stanley delivering her address

Sr Nyirenda made a plea for greater collaboration with laity. Laity can help with running of institutions/ projects, she said as they often have expertise that missionaries may not have, but working in collaboration with laity is also the best way forward. Being a religious does not automatically give one the knowhow or the authority to run or manage an institution or project. We do more harm than good to young religious when we give them the impression that being a religious automatically makes one better qualified to run or head a project/ institution even in situations where there are better qualified and more experienced lay people. By collaborating with NGOs, missionaries can challenge the systems and structures, in the North and South, which create and perpetuate poverty. Sr Nyirenda told of an uproar in Zambia recently following the publication of an Action Aid Report, 'Sweet Nothings: The human cost of a British sugar giant avoiding taxes in Southern Africa' (2013: 1).

There is a challenge for congregations to network among themselves. There is no one unified approach to issues like transparency and accountability especially related to finance. Different congregations are at different stages in addressing these and other issues, so in such, a context collaboration can be a challenge.

Sr Stanley said that there is an opportunity to tap into the wealth of experience missionaries acquired through their experience in the field to help indigenous missionaries to 'be missionaries in our own countries'. Mentoring is one way to do this but it needs to be done in a spirit of dialogue and accompaniment but as indigenous missionaries 'there is need to feel that we are in the driver's seat' and work to an agenda that corresponds to the Gospel agenda and the charism of the congregation.

As well as building the capacity of local missionaries, there is also a need to build capacity of local community leaders especially female leaders who can collaborate with local missionaries in addressing major challenges such as poverty, corruption, trafficking of women and children.



Dr Eamonn Brehony addressing the conference

CULTURE

The issue of culture is a fundamental one when it comes to succession, an issue stressed in various group discussions. It influences the way we think



Chairwoman Mrs Nora Owen invites questions

and the way we behave. In one of the ancient books of wisdom – the Talmud Bavli it is said that ‘we do not see things as they are; we see things as we are’, meaning that we all wear cultural lens when we look at life.

There are many cultural differences - differences in the ways in which power and authority are distributed in a society. Some societies are more individualistic where others are more collectivist. Some are more rule-based while others are more relationship-based. All of these differences affect the way succession plans are implemented.

Sr Stanley emphasised that some cultural beliefs and practices can create an environment of fear: fear of spirits, fear of witchcraft and fear of spells are deeply rooted in the psyche of many tribes where missionaries work. While we can talk all we want about this fear being irrational, it is not so easily driven from the mind-set. It is something that must be dealt with. A former Attorney General and Minister for Justice in Ghana said: “The effects of superstition on society are worrying and it is endangering efforts to build a healthy society based on hard work, goodwill and honesty among other social virtues.”

She went on to say:

“It is important for religious organisations to stress on the role of personal responsibility in the determination of one’s fate rather than the blind reliance on some spiritual processes to automatically change one’s fortunes from poverty to riches overnight.”

This can lead to a fatalistic attitude which spiritualises everything and accepts problems as the will of God. This fear can also create an opportunity to promote

a transformative approach to life and development. In group discussions, there was a request to take the issue of traditional belief systems, witchcraft and superstition seriously with a plea for funding to carry out research into these beliefs and practices which affect development and health issues like mental health, the influence of prayer houses, etc.

LESSONS LEARNED

In the light of the issues discussed above a number of lessons about succession have been learned from the past experience of missionaries:

- There is need to clarify the ownership of institutions especially before handing over to indigenous congregations. It is also very helpful where appropriate to have a contract with a diocese to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each party;
- Leadership has a key role in trying to ensure good balance between service to the poor and ensuring that services are self-sustaining;
- Good planning will ensure that succession goes well. It is important to discern carefully before implementing the process and it is important to identify a suitable partner for succession;
- The congregation handing over may have a role to play in mentoring those taking over the institution/project but there is a need for sensitivity and it is very important that those taking over are seen to be in the driving seat.
- It is important not to just hand over a project but also the charism of the congregation;
- It is very important to recognise cultural differences and to address them. There is a sense that we do not really understand the impact of these differences and how they can lead to attitudes of fear and fatalism.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion a plea was made:

- To those who are handing over that when moving from the driver’s seat - do not become back seat drivers;
- To those taking over, try and get the balance between serving the marginalised and being sustainable;
- To those supporting, be sensitive to the complexities of intercultural relationships.

Chapter 7: Missionary Development and Ireland's International Policy on Development

SPEAKERS

1. Dr Fiona Meehan, Development Consultant and Lecturer
 2. Sr Loice Kashangura FMSA, Lecturer in Zambia & Project Manager
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CHAIRWOMAN

Ms Marian Harkin MEP

INTRODUCTION

The last session of the conference included two presentations addressing the conference objective:

“To debate the role that Ireland can play in missionary development work in the south in future decades, and to listen to those who are charged with the task ahead identifying what they need from Irish missionaries and the Irish people in the immediate to longer term future, and specifically should Ireland continue to regard missionary development as an integral part of the Irish aid programme.”

SUPPORT FOR MISSIONARY SECTOR

Dr Meehan in her presentation focused on two main questions in the context of the continuing reduction in the numbers of Irish personnel based in overseas missionary congregations:

- What rationale is there for Irish Aid to continue funding overseas missionary congregations after there are no Irish missionaries left in place?
- What are the challenges and issues associated with continuing Irish Aid support in the long term?

The main issues addressed centred firstly around the fact that the Irish Government appears to be the only aid donor to ring fence funding specifically for missionary organisations, and to what extent this historical relationship of obligation and support can be expected to continue in the long term; and secondly, around potential challenges faced by overseas congregations in maintaining Irish Aid support as Irish national missionaries reduce their overseas presence.

While Irish Aid support through Misean Cara remains stable, and public references to the Irish missionary work stress continuing commitment, as articulated by Minister of State Joe Costello TD on the first day of the conference, concern was expressed about the lack of visibility of Irish missionary work in Irish Aid reporting and publications. Despite being funded as a distinct sector, reporting is absorbed into overall reporting for the civil society sector, and references within these publications have shrunk in recent years.



Dr Fiona Meehan addressing the conference

It was also noted that unlike many other OECD donors, the Irish State does not appear to have any clearly articulated policy establishing the parameters of the relationship between Irish Aid and faith based organisations, outside of the MOU between Irish Aid and Mísean Cara. There is only one brief reference to the missionary sector within the Civil Society Policy (Irish Aid, 2008), which speaks predominantly to and about NGOs, with a strong focus on the role of Dochas, the NGO umbrella organisation, and none on Mísean Cara.

The overall lack of public visibility and understanding around the work of the missions, outside of the missionary sector, along with weakening family and community links as Irish missionaries based abroad reduce in numbers, were identified as potential risk factors in maintaining Irish public and hence public representative support for missionary work.

Dr Meehan suggested that the “culture of just getting on with the work rather than talking about it or trumpeting it” might need to be addressed by the congregations, recognising that competition for limited resources meant that organisations had to show more clearly not just what they were doing but what impact and change it was bringing. Organisational reputation it was argued, matters in this respect, and is closely linked to public perception and visibility within the overall development sector.

CHALLENGES FOR CONTINUING FUNDING

Possible challenges identified in relation to maintaining and sustaining support from Irish Aid included:

- The focus on results and effectiveness in use of Irish Aid funds with pressure on all Irish Aid partners, including missionary organisations, to demonstrate effectiveness and impact. This requires congregations to accept a shift from being

funded because they are missionaries to being funded because of the importance and quality of the work they do, along with emphasising the importance of ensuring the necessary skills and capacity to deal with increasingly complex and demanding donor relationships.

- While clearly the situation varies significantly from congregation to congregation and location to location, where Irish development assistance has been channelled through and controlled predominantly by the Irish-born missionaries within the congregations, then effective handover and capacity strengthening strategies become even more important for continued funding.
- The focus on local ownership and partnership, as strongly reflected in the Irish Aid 2008 Civil Society Policy:

“Irish Aid will discourage civil society organisations from building up parallel service delivery structures but rather encourage them to design interventions that create incentives or pressure for improved performance from the state.”

With over 60% of Mísean Cara funding channelled to service delivery in the education and health sectors, this could be an area of possible challenge in the future.

- Given the long term nature of missionary organisational presence and engagement with local communities and the short term nature of project funding cycles, it was suggested that congregations might give more attention to developing phase-out and hand-over strategies, recognising this does not necessarily imply organisational disengagement, but rather part of a long term development support process, demonstrating long term thinking as well as achievement of short and medium term objectives.

Enjoying a break are Fr Tommy Murphy, Sr Anne Carbon and Fr Hugh Mc Mahon, Exec. Sec. of the IMU



- Possible divergence of interest might sometimes arise between the religious beliefs and values of the congregations, and expectations of what should be included in some programmes. For example, within public health programmes, provision of family planning services and use of protection in sexual relations as part of HIV/AIDS prevention may be controversial for congregations.
- The focus on Catholic ethos and practice in Catholic run schools has come to the fore in public debate in Ireland around the role of the Catholic Church. In the context of gradual or partial disengagement of Church management of Irish schools, and the increasing religious diversity in Ireland, this could possibly emerge as an issue in continuing public funding of Catholic missionary schools overseas.

Looking into the future, it was suggested that whatever form funding takes, there is an obvious rationale for one organisation, currently Misesan Cara, to coordinate and support Irish Aid funding. As long as Irish Aid continues to require partners to be registered within Ireland, local congregations will still need to go through their Irish institutional links to access funding, unless it is possible for these groups to directly deal with Misesan Cara as a registered NGO.

RATIONALE FOR CONTINUING SUPPORT

Despite the challenges discussed, Dr Meehan suggested strong arguments can be made for Irish Aid continuing to support the work of the missionary congregations overseas, including the effectiveness of the work they do, and the synergy with and contribution to Irish Aid's objectives and priorities.

The particular value and benefits of missionary approaches to development and what they bring to it provide another rationale, including the long term engagement of missionary congregations "we don't come and go, we are there to stay, we are part of the communities," the greater trust many communities have in the motives and integrity of FBOs; and the more holistic approach of the missionaries. It can also be argued that there is growing synergy between the spiritual dimension in the missionary approach and the increasing focus on the concept of wellbeing within approaches to holistic development, amid arguments about the limitations of an over concentration on the physical and material dimensions only of development.

But if these arguments are to win through, the rationale for doing so needs to be articulated, the capacity issues addressed, and the value and effectiveness and impact of the work overseas demonstrated clearly to keep the public ally Dr Meehan stated.

PERSPECTIVE FROM THE SOUTH

Sr Kashangura put forward a passionately argued rationale for continuing Irish Aid funding of overseas missionary congregations whether Irish born missionaries were present or not. The historical relationship of support between the Irish State and the missionary sector, and the nature of the missionary approach to development were at the core of her arguments for continuing support.



Chairwoman Ms Marian Harkin invites questions from delegates

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

A shared history of famine she suggested, represents both a driving force behind Irish people's support for overseas relief and development, and a bond of solidarity between the Irish people and struggling communities elsewhere in the world, as reflected in the new Irish Aid Policy 'One World, One Future':

"Our history will not allow us to ignore the reality that hunger is a daily fact of life for many people in developing countries today... We do this because of our sense of justice and compassion, born of a history of famine, suppression and conflict. And we do it because it is the right thing to do in an increasingly inter-connected world. This is about Irish values. We have never been a people who could look the other way...."

The long standing presence and work of Irish missionaries have played a significant role in practical expression of this solidarity, as acknowledged by



Sr Loice Kashangura emphasising a point in her address

Irish Aid, and Sr Kashangura felt this support should continue, as

“Missionaries are well placed because of their commitment to the marginalised and suffering who may not have access to any external aid apart from that which is channelled through the missionaries”.

Missionary approach to development

The missionary approach to development Sr Kashangura argued, is holistic and adds unique value to development interventions, as reflected within Catholic social teaching:

“For development to be authentic it must be complete, taking into account all the dimensions of the person and not be limited to satisfying basic material needs, but the most profound aspirations of the person and all people.”

(Populorum Progressio n. 14)

References in the 2000 World Bank report to the high level of trust many communities have in faith based groups, and the extent to which they are more embedded in the local communities who turn to them in times of need were cited in support of the added value missionary congregations bring to development work.

The core values underlying missionary development work - respect, justice, commitment, compassion and integrity were seen as complementing the focus in the new Irish Aid policy on solidarity with developing countries, on addressing inequality and promoting human rights. Solidarity with developing countries it was argued, implied continuing support for non-Irish missionaries, as partners who are particularly well placed to further shared values and aims, a demonstration of the Irish legacy of Meitheal (working together for the benefit of all).

Sr Kashangura saw no reason why that support should cease with the withdrawal of Irish personnel, pointing out that whatever the changes in the membership of congregations, “the values and guiding principles for the missionary approach to development remains the same”. This viewpoint echoed a statement she quoted from Minister of State, Joe Costello TD to the Misesan Cara annual general meeting in June 2012 that *“It is important that we continue to support local indigenous missionaries in seeking solutions to the perennial problems of poverty and inequality”*. From her perspective, the changing composition of missionary congregations represented not a loss but rather a success story for Irish missionaries, referring to her own presence in the conference and congregation as an illustration of this success story.

The issue of local ownership and the responsibility of governments to provide both educational and health services to the people was acknowledged, while pointing out the harsh reality of the continuing lack of government capacity to provide full services and heavy dependence on faith based organisations to fill the gaps.

Sr Kashangura also acknowledged the point in the previous presentation about the lack of visibility of missionary work, saying this needed to be taken seriously, as

“Silence is not humility and talking about the impact of our interventions is not boasting. It is about accountability.” She further pointed out that integrity is central to missionary culture, and *“We cannot talk about integrity if accountability and transparency are not part of our development equation”*.

ISSUES FROM GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Discussions amongst delegates following the presentations focused particularly on the following issues that emerged from all of the groups:

Continuing Irish Aid funding

There was a wide consensus that Irish Aid funding should continue into the future, that the missionaries continued to be an effective channel for support, there is strong coherence between Irish Aid aims and missionary work and that missionaries should continue to be an integral part of the Irish aid programme. Some said the nationality of the missionaries was not important, and that Irish Aid should be prioritising only according to the needs.

There were concerns expressed that Irish Aid funding might cease, or at least be reduced in the future as the number of Irish-born missionaries decreases, and an acknowledgement that the rationale for continuing funding needed to be more strongly articulated.

Visibility and accountability

There was a lot of discussion around the issue of public visibility and knowledge about missionary work, and a consensus that this needed to be addressed - that missionaries, including lay missionaries, needed to challenge their own humility and tell their stories, to make their work known, and to document it as the Minister of State had suggested in his address to the conference.

This issue linked in to comments about the need to be able to show impact and results, about a stronger focus on accountability, transparency, effectiveness, and the need to adopt a more business-like approach.

Capacity building

A strong focus on the importance of capacity building emerged, including references to the commitment of Misesan Cara to training and capacity building, the continuing difficulties of local congregations with project proposals and accessing funding, and a suggestion that a greater proportion of Irish Aid funding coming through Misesan Cara should be allocated to capacity building.

Other views emerging from the group discussions included some concern expressed about an over focus on getting the project funded as opposed to implementing it; the importance of local funding and community generosity and solidarity in supporting missionary work; the difficulty of getting funding for marginalised groups like pastoralists; the need to have a wider debate beyond funding on the nature of aid; and to reflect on power and power relations, who has

the funds, who controls the money. A question was raised about the Irish Church hierarchy and what their position was around these debates on missionary work and future directions and funding.

And lastly, appreciation was expressed for Sr Kashangura's anecdote of working with her sisters in the fields as a young girl, and learning to slow down weeding the vegetables so as to keep pace with them to go forward together, as a fitting metaphor for the missionary philosophy, illustrating the African proverb also quoted by Sr Clare Stanley in an earlier presentation to the conference, "if you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go with others".

LEARNING POINTS

In summary the key learning points that emerged from this session of the conference were:

1. There is development logic for Irish Aid to continue to support the work of the missionary organisations as an integral part of their overseas aid programme, whether there are Irish born missionaries present or not.
2. The missionary congregations need to:
 - > Be more articulate and visible in putting forward the rationale for continued funding;
 - > Focus more on accountability, transparency and effectiveness;
 - > Be more prepared to 'tell their stories' and ensure that the value and impact of their work is better known, particularly to the Irish taxpayers.
3. Irish Aid and Misesan Cara could allocate more funding support for capacity building for increased effectiveness of missionary congregations' operations, particularly in the areas of succession and project management.

Mr Shane Halpin, Viatores Christi poses a question



Chapter 8: Should Ireland continue to see Missionaries as an Integral Part of the Irish Aid Programme?

The answer to this question was clearly set out by the Minister of State for Trade & Development, Mr Joe Costello TD when he addressed the conference. His speech was highly significant in that it showed the intent of the Government to strengthen the partnership with missionaries through Misesan Cara as the intermediary body established to channel public funds to missionary development. Shortly after the conference Irish Aid signed a three-year memorandum of understanding with Misesan Cara that involves a grant of €16 million per annum for missionary development but which obviously depends on the total size of the Irish Aid budget over the period that is approved by Government and the Oireachtas.

So that readers of this report can understand the rationale and the growth of this strong partnership now and into the future, the minister's speech is reproduced here in full.

ADDRESS BY MINISTER JOE COSTELLO TD

"I think it is very fitting that this event has been organised as part of 'The Gathering'. Today is an important gathering of a wide range of people who have been directly involved in missionary work, who have supported missionary work down through the years or who are interested in the very pertinent subject of the changing nature of mission and of development. This event, like other gathering events, is bringing together people with a common origin and purpose; in this case a passion for humanitarian action and for helping those less fortunate than themselves.

This is another reason why it is certainly very apt that this event is part of The Gathering. Irish people have a great sense of pride in our long history of missionary work and what it has brought to poor communities all over the world.

Evidence of this can be seen from the programme for this event. It is a very impressive gathering of eminent speakers, panellists and participants, and is reflective of the great interest that is out there in the theme of this conference. Such was the interest in fact that I understand the conference was oversubscribed and you had to turn people away!"

MISSIONARY INFLUENCE

Today I would like to recognise the fact that the long tradition and commitment of Irish missionaries has led the way for much of the Irish Government's approach to development. Ireland is renowned for its professional development cooperation programme. I can assure you it is Irish missionary work that has given this programme its solid foundation.

We can say that the Irish missionaries were the pioneers in development cooperation, predating Ireland's official aid programme and deeply influencing its values.

The Government's development cooperation programme belongs to the Irish people. Irish people are proud of our long tradition of engagement with the developing world. They recognise that missionaries, both hundreds of years ago and today, actively choose to work in some of the most challenging and difficult situations. Irish missionaries tend to work in remote communities, working with those most marginalised and forgotten, people and communities for whom poverty, hunger and insecurity is an everyday experience.

CHANGING REALITIES

This conference seeks to examine the changing 'reality' of mission and missionary development today. As we know 'reality' is something that is never static. Realities have been changing at a rapid pace over your lifetimes as missionaries in the field. You have had to adapt, to modernise and to change your ways of working. I am sure many of you now find yourself managing projects, budgets and teams of people.

Of course, no change has been more sudden and dramatic than the change in the global economic reality over the past few years, which has affected us all. We have new emerging economies such as China, Brazil and India, which are driving global economic growth while sharing their knowledge and experience through increased South to South cooperation.

The balance is tipping. We once viewed developing countries as much poorer than our own. We need to recognise a new reality. Developing countries now hold most of the world's foreign exchange reserves. Six of the world's 10 fastest growing economies of the past decade are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Africa which was previously viewed by many as an object of charity is now looked to for business and trade opportunities. Dependency on aid in many developing countries is reducing as domestic tax revenues overtake aid inflows.

These are huge changes that have taken place in our generation. The world is now a more complex place but we still continue to grapple with many of the same issues. The challenges of hunger, poverty and inequality deepen and persist; and middle income countries now have the largest percentage of the world's poor.

Against this background, development programmes need to adapt and serve as catalysts for change rather than simply be a source of basic service provision. As global dynamics shift and change, all organisations are forced to redefine their role, understand their niche and adapt.

EMERGING DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The main issue in the international development agenda is what will replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which are due to expire in 2015. This framework will drive all of our development efforts after 2015, including missionary work.

Defining a coherent and effective EU position on the Post 2015 Agenda has been a major priority for the Irish Presidency of the EU. I am pleased to report that one of the main outcomes of the Irish Presidency, working in close cooperation with the EU High Representative, was the endorsement of Council Conclusions on this issue by EU Development Ministers at the Foreign Affairs Council last week. The conclusions set out the EU's position on a new global development framework to replace the MDGs ahead of the UN Special Event on the Millennium Development Goals in September.

As the negotiations on this new global development framework continue, between now and 2015 we will continue to engage with all our partners in order to understand your views, with the aim of working together to build consensus. This will be critical if we are to be successful in delivering our joint goals.

NEW AID POLICY

In this spirit, Ireland's new Policy for International Development 'One World, One Future' was launched a few weeks ago. It presents a clear direction for Ireland's contribution to international development in the years ahead.

The basic principles that missionaries hold dear - working with the poorest and tackling social injustice - resonate through this new policy.

In it, we are setting out three new goals:

- reduced hunger and stronger resilience;
- sustainable development, inclusive economic growth; and
- better governance, human rights and accountability.

I want to emphasise today that I see missionaries as key civil society partners in the achievement of the goals of the Government's development cooperation programme.

That is why the Government supports the development work of missionaries by providing multi-annual funding to Misesan Cara. This substantial funding, which will amount to €16 million this year supports the projects of Irish missionary organisations in education, health care, income generation, advocacy and human rights and in humanitarian relief work.

As some of you are aware, we are about to enter a new phase of the partnership with Misesan Cara and we will continue to look at ways to improve it, in order to deliver on our common goals. I look forward to agreeing the finer details of this renewed partnership over the coming days.

THE NEXT GENERATION

As we look to the future, we are all very aware of the decline in religious vocations in Ireland and the impact of this decline on missionary organisations and on the work in the field.

Priests, and religious brothers and sisters of our generation are looking to their counterparts in developing countries to take forward missionary work for the next generation. After such a long legacy of quality missionary work, now we have to focus on sustaining it.



Minister of State Joe Costello TD addressing the conference

With challenges come opportunities. Fortunately, the Church is strongest and at its most vibrant in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. You will be familiar with the vocation statistics quoted in his address of welcome this morning by the president of this college, Dr Patrick McDevitt. These show that there are many young people in Africa and elsewhere who continue to join religious orders. These young men and women are ready and willing to engage with development processes in their own countries and neighbouring regions. It is important that we continue to support them in seeking solutions to the perennial problems of poverty and inequality.

Many of you through your many years of experience of working in developing countries will have seen the importance of linking with local knowledge, learning from local solutions used by local people, working with local leadership, and strengthening local ownership. Working in partnerships that work for poor people will be at the heart of our approach in implementing the new aid policy.

It strikes me that the theme of this conference is really about the need to focus on the present and the future, while acknowledging and building on the enormous legacy of the past work.

Since my appointment as Minister of State for Trade and Development, I have had many opportunities to see the work of past and present missionaries, which has been funded by the Irish Government. This work continually impresses me, as does the commitment and experience of those who have dedicated their lives to working with the poorest communities in very challenging environments. Not only have they achieved a great deal from their own work but very often, they have inspired volunteers to work with them to continue this important work.

From these encounters, I am now convinced that we must capitalise on this huge pool of experience and knowledge in carrying forward the legacy of the missionaries in the years ahead.

Ireland's new policy for international development reflects our commitment to strengthen support for volunteering. We will promote participation in high quality volunteer programmes that reflect the needs of developing countries and contribute to the achievement of clear sustainable development results. We will increase volunteering opportunities for those, including retired public servants who have skills and experience which are in short supply in the developing world.

We also aim to harness the skills and experience of the African diaspora, many of whom have been educated by Irish missionaries. Having gained qualifications and experience, members of the diaspora are interested in sharing their skills and, in so doing, to contribute to the development of their own or other developing countries.

Together, we must strive to deliver tangible improvements in the lives of the world's poorest communities, while remaining accountable to the Irish

public, our international partners and the communities with whom we work in developing countries.

Now, more than ever, we must work more closely together to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our development work. We must continue to communicate to the Irish public about the impact of our work. I would encourage all of you to document and share the impact of your work, to tell the story about the changes that you are bringing about in the lives of poor people and communities.

We should continue to challenge ourselves and think of new ways of working, learning from our past but looking to our future, and the interconnectedness of our world. We can always do more and always do better”.

MINISTER'S COMMITMENT

Irish missionaries can take courage from the minister's firm commitment that the development work of their successors in the field will not be abandoned by the Irish Government. The desire and the intent of the Government “in carrying forward the legacy of the missionaries in the years ahead” is very clear from the public commitments given by the minister at the conference and also in earlier speeches he made at the launch of the theme of the conference on 14 June 2012, and at the annual general meeting of Mísean Cara on 26 June 2012.

In summary, the commitment is both strong and clear from the minister's words:

1. “I want to emphasise today that I see missionaries as key civil society partners in the achievement of the goals of the Government's development cooperation programme.”

2. “Priests, and religious brothers and sisters of our generation are looking to their counterparts in developing countries to take forward missionary work for the next generation. After such a long legacy of quality missionary work, now we have to focus on sustaining it.”
3. “These young men and women are ready and willing to engage with development processes in their own countries and neighbouring regions. It is important that we continue to support them in seeking solutions to the perennial problems of poverty and inequality.”
4. “I am now convinced that we must capitalise on this huge pool of experience and knowledge in carrying forward the legacy of the missionaries in the years ahead.”

This commitment puts a big responsibility on Irish missionaries to ensure that their succession plans are implemented effectively in a sustainable manner. It also puts an equal responsibility on missionaries carrying on the legacy that they have the skills and the capacity to meet the requirements that will be demanded by Irish Aid in the years ahead.

Support mechanisms to meet these responsibilities are outlined in the strategic plan Mísean Cara has agreed with Irish Aid for the period 2013 – 2016. The plan also contains a specific intention for missionaries “to document and share the impact of your work” and “to tell the story about the changes that you are bringing about in the lives of poor people and communities”.

Missionary groups will remain conscious of the questions posed and the challenges outlined at the conference in relation to Irish State funding for missionary development into the future.

Delegates taking a break



Chapter 9: Launch of Sustainable Livelihoods Approach – a critique of theory and practice

INTRODUCTION

During the conference a book was launched entitled *Sustainable Livelihood Approach - a critique of theory and practice*. The book was authored jointly by Prof. Stephen Morse, University of Surrey and Sr Nora McNamara MSHR, both of whom spoke briefly at the launch.

Sustainability is a current topic worldwide and one which leads us to a deeper vision and understanding of how we can achieve a sustainable lifestyle. We all know it is a worthwhile goal, but, how can we apply the principles of sustainability in the real world ... in communities in developing nations where income insecurity is the troubled norm?

CASE STUDY

The book provides some practical answers through a case study on a micro-finance scheme in Idah diocese in Nigeria where the authors worked during the 1980s. It was very appropriate for the conference to host the launch because the case study involved centred around the work of the Catholic Diocesan Development Services organisation which uses a faith-based approach in its development work. It is an approach that was discussed during the conference, where participants take control of their situation in bottom-up or people-centred development, as the only way to effect real change for the poor and the marginalised where they can help themselves.

Launching the book, Mr Tom Crowley, Team Leader for Sustainable Livelihoods and Environmental Justice with Trócaire said that the sustainable livelihood approach (SLA) described in detail in the book may be rooted in one place and time but they can transcend such frontiers and help to inform SLAs for other places and times.

When the authors first began to work together in the 1980s the dominant theme was Integrated Rural Development (IRD). IRD has long since evolved in many directions, not least because of the growth in urbanisation and a lessening of the focus on agriculture by many aid agencies during the 1980s and 1990s.

Mr Crowley reflected on how IRD had always been associated with 'projects' as a more micro-scale intervention planned for a discrete time-frame with specified resources. Projects began to wane as the focus shifted to programmes as longer-term interventions. However, the central idea of IRD - bringing together many aspects of importance to the poor rather than just focussing on one - has shown resilience and makes much sense. A sole focus on agricultural production without any consideration of how the produce would fare in markets where prices are unpredictable, or the education of children, or the supply of potable water to help maintain household health, makes little sense. Even getting produce to markets requires roads.

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

In the late 1990s a new form of integration came into being known as Sustainable Livelihoods. It was an amalgam of many influences and IRD was just one of a number of influences in this new wave, but sustainable livelihoods rapidly gained in popularity amongst development practitioners, researchers and policy makers.

Sustainable livelihoods has a strong focus on people and is context neutral in the sense that it could apply to both rural and urban households, and the inclusion of the term 'sustainable' taps into a strong theme of making sure that what we do now does not damage

future generations or restrict their livelihood choices. Sustainability was very much a 1990s trend and its popularity still persists, largely because like integration it makes much sense.

Mr Crowley said that he “was reassured by the centrality of keeping what is important to the poor at the centre of analysis; listening to and hearing people’s stories; and the power of people taking control of their situation to effect change”.

The research in the book is a useful and timely contribution to development practice and thinking as we search for new tools to help us think about

sustainability that respects the environment and the rights of everybody to a life of dignity and to realise their potential regardless of where they are born ... be it in the global north or the global south.

The book can be purchased online from:
<http://www.springer.com/social+sciences/population+studies/book/978-94-007-6267-1>

Amazon (also available for Kindle)
<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Sustainable-Livelihood-Approach-Critique-Practice/dp/9400762674> (UK site)

Attending the book launch were Sr Agnes Agbom, Sr Mary Rose Madubuko and Sr Nora McNamara



Fr Pat Raleigh SSC reports back from a discussion group



Sr Beatrice Magaya, Sr Pamela Penkert, Sr Kay O'Neill and Sr Arsenia Joao Sepatinha



Sr Rowena Galvin, Sr Clare Stanley and Sr Louis Marie O'Connor, Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny



Chapter 10: Delegates' evaluation of the conference

At the conclusion of the conference delegates were invited to complete an evaluation form to indicate what benefits and learning they had derived from it. Of the evaluation forms completed, 81% rated the conference as “excellent”, and the remaining 19% rated it as “very good” or “good”. That is a very high satisfaction rating for a conference.

The reaction of delegates to the learning benefits of the conference was over-whelmingly positive. One delegate summed it up saying it was “a tsunami of knowledge” and another said the “presentations were full of practical examples and insights” and “each one had its own learning and challenge”. All of the speakers were described as “excellent with each one having their own point to get across” and being “able to talk from real experience and identify challenges”.

The following comments of delegates indicate what they learned from the conference:

- The three presentations on succession were grounded in practicality. Wonderful to hear some honest and difficult perspectives from our African sisters about themselves and how they experienced Irish missionaries.
 - The challenge to do research on how cultural belief systems based on fear is oppressive and brings lack of freedom.
 - All the themes were very enriching, and they deepened my thinking critically on each of them.
 - Presentations on succession were excellent, honest, and challenging. The insights shared were revealing, as was charism as part of succession and sustainability.
 - I felt encouraged and empowered as a young person.
 - A well organised and informative conference with each presentation having something to offer.
 - Need for planning and training of personnel to take over. More networking and skills training needed now.
 - It was informative, inspiring, and challenging. The issues brought up were ones rarely spoken about.
- It named issues that needed to be named so that they can be tackled.
- The session on mission was very informative and brought out deep experiences that helped me with a deeper understanding of mission.
 - The entire conference was a very valuable intervention in the life of missionaries with so many challenging ideas put forward.
 - There is a tendency now for us to hold onto projects for the wrong reasons. This conference will help to re-orient and to see succession, mentoring, and handing over as growth and not diminishment. We were made aware of the importance of having an exit strategy in place.
 - Awareness was raised on the role that lay volunteers can play in mission.
 - The college president set the tone of the conference, and the opening address was excellent. I got something out of each of the presentations.
 - The presentations on succession covered more than ‘ending’ and ‘passing on’. They really talked about good practice from the beginning, ongoing formation and training of staff, transparency, and accountability as being necessary all along the way.
 - Aid funding going through Irish missionaries is what gave Ireland the advantage of accountability and value for money in its aid programme. That has helped to give Ireland its great international image and reputation.
 - Each presentation was excellent and relevant to where we are at. It was encouraging and a great learning process. The organisation of the whole conference was very professional.
 - The session on mission and the impact of culture was rooted in reality. I felt challenged and encouraged by the sense of collaboration and the new vision of mission. It raised a lot of questions, and brought out more information and different experiences to be shared in order to grow in different dimensions of our mission as Christians.
 - It gave a wider vision of mission and a deeper understanding of lay missionaries.

- I strongly believe it's time to walk together in hope for continuity of the wonderful works. The conference was a sharp reminder of what we are about, and to take pride in our efforts and show accountability.
- It showed the importance of training/capacity building and mentoring the younger sisters and those who are new in ministry, and also preparing the local people who will eventually take over the management of our projects.
- Missionaries and the Irish Aid programme have a common focus, aim and vision. They are partners in a process.
- The conference was about facing reality ... un-packing what sustainability means and its implications for planning now ... getting to the heart of mission and challenging some of the accepted approaches and understanding.
- The South Sudan model of collaboration could be applied to many situations – it is the way forward, as is the role of lay missionaries as an integral part of the Church side-by-side with local missionaries.
- The issue of success in mission for me not only challenges succession in leadership – north v south – but also in 'entry strategy' and 'exit strategy' within organisations and project management.

Discussion around succession was the most often mentioned learning point by delegates. Perhaps, the reason was explained by the delegate who said

"It is the reality now – the conference gave a call for urgent action". Several delegates referred to the vision put forward on the role of lay missionaries as being stimulating and inspiring for the future. A few delegates would have liked to have seen more focus on the richness of mission in Asia and in Central and South America.

One delegate summed up the benefits and learning gained at the conference with the words: "In the spirit of succession and carrying the flame as advocated strongly in the conference, all the topics were beneficial to my congregation, and I hope that lessons will be taken on board".

Analysis of the views of delegates immediately after the conference demonstrates clearly that the ideas, experiences, questions, and the suggestions they had heard over the two days were very challenging and important for the future of mission and missionary development. These present a challenge not only for each congregation and lay missionary/volunteer sending organisations but also for the IMU and for Misesan Cara in future strategic planning and action plans at this critical time of change in mission.

The conference was merely a spring-board for action that will shape and manage the future of mission and of missionary development. That action is now the responsibility of everyone involved – individually, collectively and collaboratively.

RSHM Sisters Arsénia Sepátinha, Breda Shelly, and Beatrice Magaya listening attentively.



PHOTO GALLERY





Sr Loice Kashangura FMSA presenting a statuette as a symbol of friendship and thanks to the people of Ireland for their support to the FMSA sisters and to all missionaries. The statuette depicts three people joining hands in friendship and solidarity. It is now on display in All Hallows College.



Fr Eugene Curran CM makes a presentation to Mr Matt Moran at the end of the conference.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MS ZELIE MCGRATH,
MISEAN CARA, AND THE IRISH CATHOLIC NEWSPAPER

DESIGN BY DARA NI BHEACHÁIN
PRINTED BY CITY PRINT LIMITED, CORK

The Power of Us

The road is rising up to meet us
We want to go far, therefore, we need to go together



This report is published by the **Mission Today & Tomorrow** Conference Organising Committee,
All Hallows College, Gracepark Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.

October 2013.