

Mission & Evangelism Report to Synod Annual Meeting 2010

This committee meets twice a year, in February and September. Our recommendation from September 2009 was approved by the Synod Life Committee acting as a Commission of Synod later that year and has been passed for payment. The recommendation from our February 2010 meeting comes to this Annual Meeting for approval and payment from late May 2010. The two sets of recommendations are at the end of this report.

There are two different issues that the committee engaged with this year which become the basis of this report. Both involve the Synod moving further in mission and evangelism and have been signalled and approved at earlier Annual Meetings.

The first involves the Synod's employment of staff. For many years the Clerk, now the Executive Officer was the only Synod employee. Then in late 1994, the Synod of Otago and Southland sought a Mission Enabler who would live in the Synod area and mainly be employed in helping southern congregations move in mission. I had the honour of being appointed by Assembly to that position from mid 1995. My stipend equivalent was mainly paid by Synod but my employment responsibilities were to the National Church being part of the National Mission Team. Not really a Synod employee! This was also true for my successor, Rev John Daniel until the team was disbanded and John became National Mission Enabler. The Synod pay only a small proportion of his stipend according to southern involvements. Along with this though, Bruce Fraser was appointed by the Synod to be its Mission Advisor and the second employee of Synod, responsible directly to the Synod Executive as are all such employees.

When there were major changes within the National Youth Team a few years ago, Stephanie Redhead asked if she could come under the responsibility of the Synod, who was paying most of her salary. This narrowed the responsibilities of her work but did not change it significantly and the Synod were keen for her strong local responsibility and guidance to continue so she became a further employee.

Jill Kayser has been the National Kids Friendly Coach since this programme became our Children's work as part of the National Mission Team initiatives working under the name "Mission Possible". An assistant, working out of Geraldine has been taking responsibility, with Jill, for the northern part of the South Island. The Dunedin Presbytery, just before it went out of existence, applied for funding for a person to do similar work in the Synod area, where there is considerable uptake of the Kids Friendly franchise. This was granted in the September 2009 Mission and Evangelism meeting and approved by the Synod Life Committee, acting as a Commission of Synod later that year. Mrs Cheryl Harray was appointed and has started work in recent months. Following discussions with all the people and groups mentioned in this paragraph, it was decided that it would be prudent if Synod took over the employment of this position. There is a synergy about having all three regional mission staff, employed by the same group and also provides opportunity for the team to share information and to encourage each other. Only Bruce Fraser, of the three, will work from the Synod office though, where the National Mission Office also operates.

Last year's Annual Meeting gave permission for the establishment of the Lex Wylie Missionary Fellowship. This was to provide funding for up to five years in an area of rapid growth where there was little other Christian outreach and with a particular emphasis on young families. This year we had one application from the Upper Clutha parish which covers the districts of Wanaka, Albert Town, Tarras, Makerora, Hawea, Hawea Flat and Luggate. Several of these areas are growing rapidly with plenty of young families. A most successful Mainly Music has been operating in both Wanaka and Hawea Flat. These are some of the hubs where there is great opportunity for Christian growth among families. The potential is much wider than this though, and a most suitable person from the Upper Clutha parish has just been appointed to work among the expanding population throughout this area. This is the background to the application for this larger and longer allocation. We are suggesting that a review of this new work be held, late in its second year of operation, before any extension to the funding is considered. There is considerable local enthusiasm for this new venture.

The other allocations recommended to you are more straight forward so I will not highlight them but the details are outlined below.

Our membership on the committee has been quite stable but we are very pleased to welcome Liz Christenson to our committee from Dunedin-North Otago Presbytery replacing Rev Geoffrey Skilton but sad to farewell Keith Cameron who has represented the Southland Presbytery most efficiently for the last seven years.

As always we have received particularly good as well as prompt advice and service from the Executive Officer, Fergus Sime, even throughout this year of his courtship, engagement and marriage.

Allan Paulin
Convenor