

WELCOME

OFF THE MARK!

Church21 Mark II is now up and running. Luke 24 tells of a transformational journey and that's very much how we see Church21. As the two disciples walked with the risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus there were a number of dynamics at work that led to them seeing things very differently at the end of their journey than when they set out:



1. Asking the right questions

Jesus took them right back to basics by asking "What's going on?" and "What are the things that are really important?" Church21 invites parishes to ask similar foundational questions.

2. Moments of revelation

At key points the two realised more was happening than they suspected. The Church21 process is designed to help parishes discover key insights that will change how they see themselves and their place in the world.

3. A shared journey

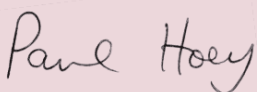
In the dynamic of discussion, listening and learning between Jesus and the disciples, a new energy and spirit of hope was released. A creative interaction between parishes and facilitators affords a similar opportunity in Church21.

4. An openness to the unexpected

The two could not have imagined how their journey could end. We're encouraging the Church21 parishes to expect the unexpected.

5. Burning hearts

They ended their journey with new motivation, purpose and energy. Whatever good may come of it for the twenty five parishes setting out on the Church21 journey it will get nowhere without that same motivation and energy that comes from encounter with the risen Lord. So will you join us, please, in praying for those burnings hearts in each of the parishes – and in your own as well?



Rev Paul Hoey
Chairman of the Parish Development
Working Group

WHO'S TAKING PART?

Twenty-five very different parishes from all over this island have signed up for the process:

Armagh

- Milltown
- Drumcree
- Diamond and Tartaraghan
- Loughgall and Grange
- Kilmore and St Saviour's

Clogher

- Dromore
- Magheracross
- Galloon Group

Connor

- Carnmoney

Cork

- Mallow Union

Down and Dromore

- Seagoe
- Hillsborough
- Ballymacarrett
- Gilnahirk
- Lecale, Down and Bright Groups
- Dromara

Dublin

- Raheny and Coolock
- Celbridge
- Donoughmore
- Howth

Derry

- Castledearg and Killeter

Kilmore and Elphin

- Florencecourt Group
- Drumcliffe

CHURCH21 CONFERENCE

11–13 September, St Patrick's College, Dublin

Ian Coffey joins us again as the keynote speaker with the theme is "*Vision: What It Is; How To Get It, Share It And Implement It.*" The following topics will be addressed:



- Addressing fears
- Empowering others for the next step
- Anticipating hurdles
- Managing change and conflict
- Formulating your vision
- Valuing your uniqueness

There will be opportunity to hear about initiatives that have been effective in helping ordinary parishes develop in ministry, and a video snapshot of some of the creative ways of involving local parishes in ministry appropriate to the 21st century.

There will also be a choice of exploratory seminars on key areas of development such as strategic outreach, sharing leadership, change in a grouped parish setting and personal spirituality.

CHURCH21 - NOT ANOTHER 'NEW IDEA'!



I must admit when I heard about the Church21 initiative I was very reluctant to get involved. I thought that the last thing Holywood Parish needs is another new idea!

However, I was persuaded at least to have a chat with the facilitator assigned to us, Chris Hollies, who assured me that Church 21 was not designed

to complicate my life and add to an already busy schedule. Rather Church 21 would provide an opportunity for us as a Parish to step back and have a good look at what we were already doing, to take stock, and make adjustments where necessary to help us be more effective in our missional aspirations.

During the initial phase I met with Chris for an hour once a month for almost a year and he also sat in on our staff meetings making helpful observations. Eventually we asked him to conduct a survey of the Parish using the Natural Church Development Audit. As a result we looked again at key aspects of our ministry, things we were already doing, but that needed a sharper focus.

In fact, as I write, Chris is working with us to manage a transition project. This is a major shift for us toward a different model of operating as a church and we are only at the front end of it...so watch this space.

And when I look back - in many respects Church 21 was the catalyst for this change - potentially so much more than just another new idea!

Rev Roger Elks, Rector, Holywood Parish

PENNIES FROM HEAVEN?

What's the challenge of the credit crunch for churches? For some parishes the immediate question will be, "How will this affect our income?" But for the parish of Primacy in Co. Down the main concern has been, "How can we as the church help people in our area who are struggling with debt, unemployment and a whole range of financial issues that threaten the stability of their lives?"

Rev. Francis Rutledge, rector, explains how taking part in Church21 last time round has enabled parishioners to think creatively about the challenges and opportunities faced by the church and community. "It gave us a sense of being able to do things that we previously might have thought beyond our reach and the Conference, in particular, challenged us to look outwards and engage with the communities around us."

"When the credit crunch hit we asked ourselves what we could do to help. Linking up with Christians against Poverty, a small team has been trained to offer CAP Money, a three week money management course to help participants get, and then stay, in control of their finances. Some of the team is made up of Church21 participants. People have been very appreciative not just of the financial advice but also of the prayer support that is offered. The whole initiative is opening up all sorts of doors of opportunity."

During May the parish worship will be focused around the theme of "God, the Bible and the Credit Crunch." Parishioners and community groups are encouraged to share in the "Cash



for the Month" campaign in which individuals commit to use cash instead of credit/debit cards wherever possible. Francis was amused to learn that one member of his church, a bank official, ran out of cash by Thursday, when he had taken part in a cash only exercise as part of the CAP course. He is encouraged that this whole project, with its outward focus on the wider community, has also had benefits for the parish in that giving has become much more consistent as parishioners consider their own responsibilities and stewardship.

Primacy is a small sized parish that, through this and other small projects, is beginning to have a big impact. Could your parish get involved in something like this?

KEEPING UP THE MOMENTUM

The Douglas Union, Cork, featured in the last edition of Church21 News but their engagement with Church21 is still bearing fruit. The rector, Canon Adrian Wilkinson, talks about their recent Easter initiative.

"This year over Holy Week we worked in partnership with the local Roman Catholic and Methodist churches to bring a little hope to people in uncertain times. We mounted a display in the local shopping centre which was manned each day by people from the 3 congregations working together.

The week began with an open air event on Palm Sunday. We travelled to both the Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic churches for prayer and readings and finished by opening our display stand at the shopping centre. We prepared a joint leaflet about Holy Week services and events and made other helpful booklets and leaflets available for free. The display stand had a prayer box where people wrote down prayers and posted them privately. We had a huge response to this and each evening one of the three churches took responsibility for praying for the requests made that day.

On Easter Day we met at the prayer garden at the Methodist Church for prayer and breakfast and reflected on our week together. It was a simple and inexpensive initiative but we had conversations in the shopping centre that we wouldn't otherwise have had. We believe we sowed seeds and made valuable connections with each other and with the community - another encouraging step along the road!



TEAM TOGETHER DAY

One hundred and twenty delegates attended the Church21 Team Together Day in All Hallows' College, Dublin. Sacrificing a few hours on St Valentine's Day, representatives from the 25 parishes began their Church21 journey in earnest. Paul Hoey outlined the Church21 process and guest speaker Bishop Ken Good inspired everyone on the topic of "The Expectant Church", focusing on the 7 churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3.

Churches are now in the preparatory phase of the parish development programme. With the help of the "Preparation Course", which was introduced on the day, they are looking objectively at their parish and beginning to articulate thoughts and ambitions for the future.

Facilitation is also an important part of the process and management consultant, Ruth Handy, gave some orientation as to how to make the most of that opportunity. Some parishes had the chance to meet with their facilitator for the first time.



Bishop Good encouraged the parishes with a little "Team Talk" and, after a some fun group work, the day finished with lunch.

Feedback from the day was very positive. "Can't wait to get started!" commented one delegate. "This has given us hope to take back to our parish" said another.

and our prayers are with the core groups as they bring the Church21 vision back to their congregations.

Bishop Good's talks are available for download from our website at www.church21.org

“The story of the Bible from beginning to end is of a God who is in the business of transformation. Part of God's ongoing work of transformation is of the transformation of his church in order that the church itself may then become the agent of transformation in the world”

Church Growth Equation:

“Hot heads plus cold hearts equal empty churches”

“Even if you're on the right track you're going to get run over if you just sit there”

Find out more about Church21 at www.church21.org

TEST YOUR GOALS

In 1998 the Fanfare Project was launched with the backing of the leaders of the mainstream denominations in the UK. It set out ten "practical goals" for churches seeking to connect with people in the 21st Century. Some have criticized them for being simplistic, yet there are many churches that are not doing these simple things that can make such a difference:

- We will make you welcome
- We will be family friendly
- We will make sure you can hear clearly
- We will be practical and relevant
- We will help you explore answers to your deepest questions
- We will offer you time to stop and think in a busy life
- We will help you make sense of the Bible and who Jesus Christ is
- We will make sure your visit will be helpful and challenging
- We will help you discover for yourself God's love, acceptance and forgiveness
- We will offer you the chance to make a new start.

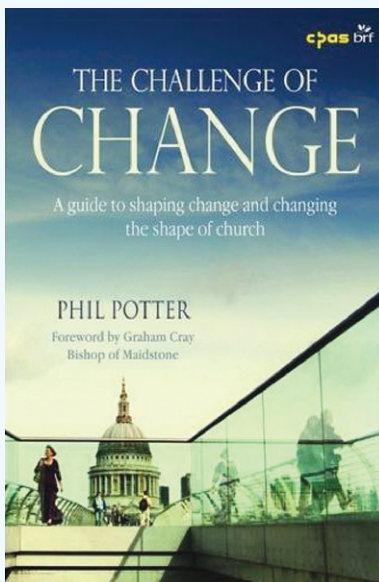


An interesting exercise might be to ask parishioners some Sunday to tick how many of these goals were achieved in a service they have just attended.

WE HIGHLY RECOMMEND...

THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE by Phil Potter

(2009 Bible Reading Fellowship)
ISBN: 9781841016047 / 1841016047



Change can be a frightening thing and if we are going to be able to move forward, careful thought and guidance is needed.

The author of *The Challenge of Change* offers a map for healthy change in the local church. Writing as a pastor and practitioner, Phil Potter explains ways of shaping change of any kind in the life of a church and presents a guide to understanding the changing shape of church, including the 'fresh expressions' of church now emerging. He uses his experiences of leading his own church through five major transition periods, with his own mistakes and personal stories as examples to illustrate his points.

The Challenge of Change is ideal for churches embarking on a particular project, or simply wanting to be equipped for whatever lies ahead. It speaks to reluctant traditionalists and impatient visionaries, to both struggling and thriving congregations. A helpful aspect is the 100 or more questions for personal and group reflection.

Phil Potter is Director of Pioneer Ministry in the Diocese of Liverpool, involved in national strategies for promoting cell church and 'fresh expressions' of church. He was vicar of St Marks, Haydock for 19 years.

GETTING THE GOOD NEWS OUT!

www.getyourchurchnoticed.com

Have a look at this companion website to the book *100 Ways To Get Your Church Noticed* – a practical communication toolkit. You'll find some suggestions to help you effectively spread the news about your church's activities, stories and any special events.

