



Belfast City Mission ANNUAL REPORT 2018/2019

Greetings from the President

In presenting our Annual Report for the year 2018/19 I want to begin by paying tribute to our Missionaries and those who work at Headquarters. I have read the reports covering the work in each of our Halls and have nothing but admiration for our Missionaries and those who faithfully support them week by week.



The work of the Belfast City Mission is challenging as Missionaries seek to get along side and support many in our society who are vulnerable and often living chaotic lifestyles. The apathy and indifference they face is in many ways nothing new, but there can be no doubt that the problems faced by society are much more demanding as increasingly our fellow citizens are caught in poverty, many are struggling with addictions and mental health issues and many seek to deal with loneliness and isolation.

In such circumstances discouragement would be understandable and yet Missionaries, whilst acknowledging the difficulties they face, note many positive developments and paint a positive picture of hope. Hope that comes from an assurance that we serve a God who is in control, a God who cares, who understands, a God who can meet at the point of every need. Please pray for our staff as they proclaim by word and deed the good news of the gospel, the good news of the Son who can set men free.

Pray also for our staff at Headquarters who ensure in a quiet, diligent way by careful administration, the smooth running of the Mission. Give thanks also for the members of our Governing Body and Board of Superintendents who provide wise counsel and faithful leadership as they seek to lead and guide the Mission and address the many challenges we face.

During the year we have also opened dialogue with colleagues in the Presbyterian Church to explore how, in these days of increasingly limited resources we might constructively work together to ensure that we do everything we can to reach those right across Belfast who have little or no time for spiritual things. Pray for us as we prayerfully consider how we might jointly ensure the message of the Gospel is clearly heard and understood by those who live in and visit Belfast.

Ronnie Armour
President

MISSION HALL SUPERINTENDENTS

• Ronnie Armour	Fairview Road
• Vacant	Mountcollyer
• Vacant	Sandy Row
• John Douglas	Kilburn Street
• George Dunbar	Island Street
• Vacant	Canton Street
• Tommy Irwin	Jersey Street
• Norman Jackson	Ballybeen
• Vacant	Bloomfield Drive
• Vacant	Kimberley Street
• Evan Rice	Glencairn
• Vacant	Rathcoole
• Roger Thompson	Great Northern St
• Bobby Woods	Shore Road
• Fred Teeney	Mayo Street
• Vacant	Ballysillan



President
R Armour



Vice President and Treasurer
R Thompson



Honorary Secretary
Rev D Bannerman



Executive Secretary
B Brown



Office Bearers

President:

Mr Ronnie Armour

Vice-President:

Mr Roger Thompson

Honorary Treasurer:

Mr Roger Thompson

Honorary Secretary:

Rev Denis Bannerman

Executive Secretary:

Mr Bobi Brown

GOVERNING BODY

The President, Vice President, Hon Treasurer, Hon Secretary, with the following:

Rev D Johnstone
Rev J Maddock
Rev G F McKeown
Rev A S Smyth
Rev W M Smyth
Rev I Fleck
Mr J Douglas
Mr T Irwin
Mr R Woods
Mr E Rice
Rev B Stevenson
Rev D Rankin
Rev B Smyth
Rev S Castles
Mr F Teeney
Mr R McMenemy
Mr N Jackson
Mr G Dunbar
Rev B McManus



Honorary Secretary's Report

Rev D Bannerman

SEEKING A CITY FOR GOD

In Hebrews 11, where we have that great roll-call of heroes of the faith, the writer tells us concerning Abraham: that *he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.* (10) Of course, Abraham was not thinking of Ur, or Haran, or Bethel or any of the other places where he spent time in his life's journey with God – but rather he had in mind that celestial city which, in faith, he looked forward one day to being a citizen of. He would serve God in many other cities before that most desirable city would become his eternal residence.

While the city of Belfast is the sphere of labour for the Staff of the Belfast City Mission, their efforts are directed towards helping people to find that other City, the one with eternal foundations whose designer and builder is God. Throughout the past year the missionaries have been helping people, old and young, to seek and find that City.

AN UNCHANGING GOSPEL TO A FAST CHANGING CITY

As ever, the work of a missionary is cross generational; and, as time passes, is becoming increasingly cross cultural as well. Our staff are meeting more and more people whose first language is not English and whose place of birth and homeland is not 'Norn Irn' – they, like Abraham, have become sojourners in a strange land and have made the City of Belfast their refuge and their home.

Belfast too is changing rapidly with renewed and expanding infrastructure and modernised transportation networks – the 'Glider' is a word that is becoming familiar as people adjust to the new public rapid transport system.

How we do 'church' is changing too. In an age where many people no longer attend a church service once, let alone twice, on a Sunday in anything like the numbers they did even a decade ago; it has become necessary to find new and effective ways of reaching people where they are most often to be found. To a degree, this is taking Christian witness back closer to how it was done when the Mission was brought into being not far off 200 years ago.

It is encouraging to note, from the reports submitted by the missionaries, that they are finding new and effective ways to reach people with the gospel – often adapting well tested methods and applying them in fresh strategies; and willingly taking risks to challenge the apathy and indifference that characterises so much of society as we enter the final year of the second decade of the 21st century. People still need to find that '*City that has foundations*' – even if fewer than ever before are conscious of their need or share that desire!

As can be imagined, the work and witness of our staff brings with it a wide variety of challenges. There are encouragements and discouragements, joys and sorrows, successes and failures, trials



and tribulations, fears and apprehensions – and all the other emotions and experiences of Christian witness in this modern age.

WHAT'S IT LIKE – BEING A MISSIONARY TO A BIG CITY?

Here are some insights from the missionaries reports. Many highlight problems with family breakdown, due often to substance abuse – mainly with alcohol, but also growing evidence of drug abuse. There is evidence of a rise in the rate of suicides, especially, but not exclusively, among the young. A missionary speaks of the suicide of a young girl who was part of what was once a church-going family.

Another missionary, who has contact with a homeless hostel, highlights problems with addictions stating that 13 residents have died in a three year period. To address this situation some of our staff have arranged specialised courses on addiction with another Christian Charity working in the field.

Someone once posed the question with regard to trying to influence society for good: *which is better, to place an ambulance at the bottom of the cliff, or put a fence at the top?* Sadly, by the time the missionary comes into contact with many people with addiction problems, it is the ambulance at the bottom that is the most timely response. The fence at the top is more appropriate for the young and those who may well be tempted to experiment with substances that are inherently addictive. Prevention is always a desirable strategy and so work with and witness among the young remains a vital part of the Mission's work.

The staff, in their reports, speak of both encouragements and challenges in youth and children's work. Finding adequate numbers of suitably trained and sufficiently motivated leaders and teachers remains a perpetual challenge; however there are notable encouragements and successes in many districts. Here is a flavour!

On The Friday night of The Summer Kids Club we invited the parents to come for a fun night/fundraiser'. It was great this year to see different parents and friends! One father stood outside the door shaking because he was uncertain of why his child had asked him to come.... Thanks were expressed by an unsaved grandfather for the time invested in his grandchildren and he gave a generous donation to the work of the hall.

There are successes too with children for whom Belfast is a strange city in a strange land. A young Kurdish boy of 8, who was the interpreter for his family, asked me if I had any toys - he and his sisters didn't have any. Thankfully I had a few games and books left over from the toy appeal at Christmas. It was a joy to hand them over and see the sheer delight on the faces of the children.

As the missionary says: being able to help people practically is a great witness for the Lord. People remember you for your acts of kindness and the hope is that they will understand why we do it. We do it to show the love of God and to bring glory to the Saviour.

Another missionary writes: we have seen a few new faces in the hall, which is a source of great encouragement, particularly one young man who had recently become a Christian and was "looking what to do next...". Previously coming to our Youth Club, he just came through the doors and wanted to know more. This young man is really looking at how to live for God, despite a friendship

circle that may try and dissuade him. To see him continue to come as and when work permits means we can talk things through and we hope to see him grow and mature in the Christian walk.

We had another young man restored to faith around this time so it is a joy to share reading materials and to talk of the things of God!

As always, an indispensable ingredient in the work that the missionaries and their workers do is prayer. This comment is typical: *Our prayer team is getting stronger with a real desire to touch God's Throne for our district. Souls have come to know the Lord this past year and new connections made with families in real need.*

Of course the routine of preaching and pastoral work of the mission continues in every district. Sunday evenings and on various nights of the week the scriptures are preached and taught to people of all ages and at all stages of life. In some districts the meetings are small in number, yet the missionaries are faithful to God and to His Word. Although, as in churches, Sunday School and youth work is becoming more difficult, yet faithful teachers and leaders continue to instruct the young in the values of eternity. This is a priceless investment in young lives that we trust will yield spiritual fruit that will endure to eternity.

VARIED METHODS – CONSISTENT MESSAGE

Special occasions present opportunities for the gospel and the mission staff are adept at devising and planning 'special occasions' as often as is practicable – harvest, Christmas, Easter, organisation displays and parents nights, box openings, tea parties, men's fellowships, footballing for Christ, special missions and teaching weeks. All of this in addition to speaking at school assemblies, residential homes, kids clubs, mums and tots, craft classes, homework clubs, language classes, advice centres, the list is multifaceted and virtually endless.

Summer months sees Holiday Bible Clubs, Five Day Clubs, summer camps, family fun days, football camp etc..

There has probably never been a time in the entire history of the Belfast City Mission when as many different and varied approaches have been employed in attempting to reach people with the gospel of Christ – yet the need remains greater than can be addressed.

In the routine work of visiting people in their homes, at their doors, in places that they frequent either willingly or unwillingly (like periods of hospitalisation); of offering comfort and help in situations of bereavement or receiving bad news regarding health issues – in all of this the missionary is God's representative at the time and in the place of need.

This is a work that takes its toll on the energy levels and coping mechanisms of even the strongest in character and robust in faith; and so the prayer support of the believers within the Mission and throughout the wider Church is vital to present and future fruitfulness – as the Mission continues to SEEK A CITY FOR GOD!

Rev Denis Bannerman
(Hon. Secretary)



Some of the fellowship from Shore Road Hall who instead of giving Christmas Cards to each other signed a large card and put a donation in a box. Amount raised for Northern Ireland Children's Hospice was £300.



Mr Bert Crooks being presented with a gift from Secretary Bobi Brown after retiring after 43 years of Sterling service as Superintendent in Bellvue St and Sandy Row Halls

BELFAST CITY MISSION Annual Rally

Thursday 30th April 2020 @ 7.30
Venue Assembly Buildings

Guest Speaker - Rev Bobbie Stevenson
Guest Singer - Melanie Topley
Moderator Rev Dr William Henry
will bring the greetings of the
General Assembly

Praise led by - PS 150

Obituary

It is with sadness that we record
The Home Call of Mrs Jean Anderson
(23.09.2018)
wife of the late. R.G. Anderson (Missionary)
Precious in the sight of the Lord
is the death of his saints.

BELFAST CITY MISSION ANNUAL CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2019

As usual Belfast City Mission will distribute toys and foodstuffs around many needy families in our 16 Mission Districts around the Christmas period. We are so grateful to all those who participate each year to help alleviate those who find it difficult at this time of the year.

This year's details are as follows...
Gifts of Toy's and non-perishable foodstuffs can be delivered to Glencairn Mission Hall, Forthriver Road BT13 3US

on Mon 2nd Dec to Wed 4th Dec 10.00am – 2.30 pm
then the following week
Mon 11th Dec to Wed 13th Dec

DUE TO HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS
ALL TOYS, COSMETICS, TOILETRIES
MUST BE NEW AND ALL FOODTUFFS
MUST HAVE A GOOD SHELF LIFE DATE.
"THANKING YOU IN ANTICIPATION"



Back Row L to R

Paul McCaw, Jordan Neill, Willie Logan, David Bisset, Michael Waddell, Ivan Patterson, Willie Cowan, David Bell, Alan Martin, Gary Bingham, Andy Williamson

Front Row L to R

(inset) Stanley Kyle, Errol McCrory (Retired) Raymond Hume (Retired) Billy McCullagh, Lloyd Watson, Bobi Brown (Executive Secretary) Tom Marshall, Tom Gamble, Walter Simms, (inset) George Lunn

Office Staff/Retired Missionaries and Widows



Angela Magill



Martha Brown



David Bell



*Bobi Brown
Secretary*



*George Ferguson
Retired*



*Sam Morrow
Retired*



*Jim Lawther
Retired*



*Eddie Kelso
Retired*



*Harry Creighton
Retired*



*Ernie Shooter
Retired*



*Roy Graham
Retired*



*Arthur McClelland
Retired*

Remember especially in your Prayers our Mission Widows

Mrs Janet Smith (Bob Smith)
Mrs Ellen Cooke (Billy Cooke)



16th Newtownabbey Boys' Brigade (Rathcoole Hall) win Best Kept Community Planting Competition

The 24 August 2018 was judgement day at Antrim Castle Gardens for the Best Kept Gardens Competition in Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council. After being shortlisted for their work at Clonmore House Care Home garden in Rathcoole. Jim Holmes and three lads Ben Taylor, Bradley McGarrell and Karl Boyd from 16th Newtownabbey Boys' Brigade Company won the award for the Best Kept Community Planting 2018. The lads have been working on the garden since April 2018 as their Community Service for the Queens Badge. The photograph shows the gardening team with the certificate awarded and a token for £100 towards next year's planting.



On Wednesday morning 14 November 2018 the Women's Fellowship on BCM Shore Road Hall held a Coffee Morning in aid of Friends of the Cancer Centre, Belfast City Hospital. The Coffee Morning raised £500 for the Centre. In the photo Mrs Ann Magee, Mr Gary Bingham Missionary and Mrs Sue Haig.

Ballybeen Boys' Brigade celebrate 40th Anniversary



Ballybeen Mission Hall 3rd Belfast Company of Boys' Brigade held a 40th Anniversary Service on Sunday 3rd March 7pm. A History and Memories Of B.B. was given by former Missionary Mr Ernie Shooter. Greetings was brought by the President of Belfast Battalion of The Boys' Brigade Mr David Hunter and the special speaker for the evening was Mr Uel Finlay.



At the 52nd Belfast Boys' Brigade (Shore Road Hall) The Anchor Boys & Junior Section presented a Cheque for £1000 a representative of Tiny Life at their Parents Night. This was the Boys' Brigade project this year. The boys and officers did a Sponsored walk and Spelling B. Mrs Sally McClelland also retired as an officer aged 88, Sally trained as an officer at the age of 80 a great example to us all.



281st NI GIRLS' BRIGADE RATHCOOLE RETIREMENT OF CAROLYN HEWITT (CAPTAIN)

The Belfast City Mission, Rathcoole Girls' Brigade was founded in September 1977 and Carolyn Hewitt has been the only Captain since its formation. Carolyn started as a GB girl in Abbots Cross Presbyterian Church and became an Officer while in their G.B. Company before she was appointed as Captain here in Belfast City Mission Rathcoole.

When the company was formed in 1977 Rathcoole Estate was the biggest in Europe and a very different place than it is today. Our GB Company provided a safe and secure environment for girls to meet, for many it was there only interest outside of school or home. Carolyn ensured that every girls needs were catered for by providing activities, days away and Camps etc.

In those days, to most families, holidays were a luxury they couldn't afford and GB Camp provided the girls with an opportunity to escape their everyday lives and form lifelong friendships. If the families couldn't afford it, Carolyn ensured the girls went anyway.

Throughout the years Carolyn has taken great pleasure in nurturing girls through our Company and seeing them reach their full potential. Now Carolyn is having the joy of seeing the second and third generations of some families join the Company. She knows all the families individually and can often tell who a girls Mummy or Granny is instantly.

Over the years, Carolyn has made a massive personal commitment to our Company, in terms of both time and energy. At one point, different sections of the Company were meeting on three separate days, Tiny Tots and Explorers on a Saturday morning, Bible Class on a Sunday morning and the rest of the Company on a Monday night and Carolyn was always there to make sure things were running smoothly, she was first through the door and last out at the end of the night. In addition to her responsibilities within her own Company, she also played an extremely active role in running the Glenabbey District of the Girls' Brigade for many years.

On a personal level, girls know they can confide in her and that she is there to quietly provide practical, emotional and most importantly spiritual support in any situation. Many families could testify that Carolyn has been their rock in times of bereavement, illness and even, on occasions, financial difficulties.

However, to this day, Carolyn remains extremely humble and has never sought any praise or recognition for her efforts. Carolyn has undoubtedly been a friend, role model and confidante to hundreds of girls over the last 42 years.

At our 42nd Annual Display on Friday 6th April 2019 Carolyn announced that she would retire as Captain of the Company but to all of our pleasure would remain as President.

The impact that Carolyn has made to individual lives and families of the Rathcoole District and further afield cannot be put into words Eternity alone will only tell.

Matthew 25 : 21
"Well done, thy good and faithful servant".

**Angela Magill
(Officer)**



Presentation to Carolyn by Bobi Brown, Executive Secretary



A MEMO FROM THE SECRETARY

The Scriptures have a few conundrums that we find hard to comprehend, for example, how can we get our heads around the Sovereignty of God in an individual's election unto salvation and yet at the same time as humans we have a responsibility to repent of our sins and be saved. Martin Luther found it hard to accept the book of James in Scripture which speaks much about works, yet the Scriptures clearly teaches that faith without works is dead. Yes! We are not saved by works but for works.

As Secretary of Belfast City Mission I am reminded over and over again that our God is a God of Faithfulness, a God of Generosity, a God of Benevolence, a God who is known as Jehovah Jireh, the God who provides. Yet I realise that God does not flutter down from heavens balcony £20 notes or cheques into the Mission Office to meet our Annual Financial needs. We have a duty as a Mission to generate funds, to do all that we can do to make sure our needs are met humanly speaking and be good stewards of what we receive. Someone has said, *"God feeds the birds but he doesn't throw the worms into the nest"*

So as a Mission today trying to survive in austere times when faithful givers of the past have gone to glory and the commitment and vision of a past generation seems to have long gone. What can we do? How can we manage? Yes! We depend wholly on God through donations from individuals and various churches from offerings from our own Mission Halls but we also depend on people who are moved by God to give generously. As a minister said as he was praying to God for financial help that God had answered his prayer but it was still in believers pockets.

"Your money can make you an overseas Missionary without ever leaving your home town, an evangelist without ever mounting a platform, a Christian broadcaster without ever entering a studio, a Bible teacher without ever having written a book" (John Blanchard)

"Another year has passed and like so many before it, it has not been an easy one from a financial perspective. While some experts would tell us that there has been some improvement in the economic situation, most of us have not seen or experienced much in the way of change because for individuals and organisations the pressures and hardships have continued. Also, as we move towards Brexit there are many uncertainties, fears and warnings about what the future might hold." In the light of such circumstances we could easily lapse into worry and anxiety about our finances in the future but we don't need to do that and for a very good reason – our almighty and ever faithful God, our great provider, is always present with us. When Joshua was taking over from Moses as leader of the Israelites he was naturally very apprehensive but God spoke to reassure him. In Joshua Chapter 1 we read the Lord's words to him as follows – 'Be strong and courageous, do not be terrified, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.' That same Lord has been with us and has sustained us over past years and He will continue in a like manner in the months and years to come. We can look to and depend on Him to supply all our needs and that includes our finances.

Belfast City Mission

Statement of Financial Activities (including Income and Expenditure Account) Year ended 28 February 2019

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Year ended 28/02/19	Year ended 28/02/18
	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources				
Income from donations and legacies				
Voluntary income	234,913	-	234,913	276,113
Activities for generating funds	-	-	-	-
Investment income	90,497	-	90,497	62,219
Income from charitable activities	256,143	-	256,143	251,637
Other income	61	-	61	5,837
Total incoming resources	581,614	-	581,614	595,806
Resources expended				
Expenditure on raising funds	544,302	-	544,302	557,862
Expenditure on charitable activities	120,932	-	120,932	117,637
Other expenditure	10,622	-	10,622	11,310
Total resources expended	675,856	-	675,856	686,809
Net resources expended	(94,242)	-	(94,242)	(91,003)

I wish to conclude by thanking the ongoing generosity of so many loyal members and supporters of the Mission scattered across the Province and beyond who supply much of our 'bread and butter' income through offerings, donations, gifts and legacies; all these people are greatly appreciated as they serve the Lord and the work of the Mission in this important way.

Roger Thompson Treasurer



Belfast City Mission is an Urban Evangelistic Mission. We are among one of the oldest Urban Missions still in existence. Our work is carried out in the inner City districts alongside a number of areas in greater Belfast. Currently we cover 16 districts where we have Mission Halls and Centres used for evangelism. We are faith based but we are supported in our work by many churches in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, auxiliary fellowships alongside generous donations and gifts from other churches and individuals.

The aim of our Mission is to see the promotion of the Gospel of Christ in our City and to give God the glory in all we say and do. We seek to encourage those who have lost direction in their lives to look to Christ as “The Way”. For those who are seeking understanding in their lives to look to Christ as “The Truth”. To those who have lost hope in their lives to look to Christ as “The Life”. We forward these aims in spiritual and practical ways.

These include: Gospel Services, Bible Study, Prayer Fellowships, Men`s and Women`s groups, Youth organisations, Pastoral Visitation, Outreach, Luncheon Fellowships, Homework Clubs, Mother and Toddler groups, English Classes and association with Food Banks.

Prayerfully and practically we would value your support.



Belfast City Mission

Glengall Exchange
3 Glengall Street
Belfast BT12 5AB

Tel: 028 9032 0557

Fax: 028 9031 1793

Email: info@belfastcitymission.org.uk

Website: www.belfastcitymission.com

Charity No. NIC 102621