

Proposals for St Martin-in-the-Fields international work

The following proposals for our long term international strategy are based on the results of the internal and external consultation on St Martin's international work conducted during summer and autumn 2007 by the International Committee on behalf of the PCC.

The Committee would like to thank all members of the congregation who have actively participated in the consultation and shared their thoughts with us. Without your support, this report would not have been possible.

The **aim of this consultation** was to look at how to advance our international work as part of the wider renewal of St Martin's and in the context of MAP2007-10.

By means of the consultation exercise the International Committee sought to:

- Audit existing work
- Discover individual and collective potential
- Take into account internal and external views and ideas
- Relate outcomes to MAP 2007-10

The **methodology** used was as follows:

- Structured questionnaires – internal and external stakeholders
- Collation into two documents which reflected these perspectives for PCC to comment
- Identification of themes within which the ideas could be gathered and duplication reduced
- Work with PCC for preliminary feedback on timelines and fit with MAP2007-10
- Further reflective iteration with a retreat day in Salisbury
- Production of proposed strategy

In its proposals the International Committee has endeavoured to be faithful to the breadth and scope of the rich ideas which emerged from the consultation, whilst also producing a feasible and well-balanced programme. The document seeks to prioritise goals, objectives and activities in a way that makes the strategy fit well with the wider MAP 2007-10 and makes the most of the potential offered by the congregation and by the unique position of St Martin-in-the-Fields.

The proposals were received and discussed by the PCC in March 2008, and the document presented by the Vicar to the congregation at the April 2008 AGM as a guiding basis our work for the years to come.

Building on this we are circulating the document to the congregation to provide feedback on the consultation in more detail. We welcome your comments on its current content and will work with the PCC to build a prioritised plan for its implementation, while taking forward practical work on its key propositions and continuing the valuable work St Martin's is already doing in this domain.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. You can send your comments by email to Michael Hammer, Chair of the International Committee at michael.hammer@btinternet.com, or our clergy link Richard Carter at richard.carter@smif.org, call Michael under 020 7735 2881, or send comments by post to the parish office c/o Richard Carter.

Goals, Objectives and Activities

Goal A. Create a sense of responsibility to respond to international needs

Many respondents talked of the responsibility of SMITF, with its unique position, to respond to international needs. This was felt to be important an integral part of the life and work of SMITF, but should also include proactive external communication about these needs and our actions.

“any [international] work undertaken needs to be integrated into the life of the worshipping community”

“provide a heartbeat of prayer within the regular worship so that the body is oxygenated and tuned in relation to international issues”

“promote social justice issues and protest against violations of human rights”

“reflect the big picture and think outside the box”

“be unashamedly topical”

“Go out into the Square”

Objectives:

1. Make International issues an integral and visible part of the life of St Martin’s

MAP References

6: *“Developing our relationships with, and our activity related to the global community and the global church”*

Suggested activities:

- During worship – using prayers, and building on rich tradition of music and drama
- Use the liturgy from the various Provinces of the Anglican Communion
- Use of art work and visual images in the Church and in the new spaces with sensitivity to the designs and plans developed as part of the building project
- Sermons on international issues, including from visiting preachers
- Relate Bible studies to international themes
- Talks by people with direct experience, including from members of our congregation with overseas experience
- Produce pamphlets or fact sheets on specific international issues to aid private reflection and prayer

2. Promote international social and ecological justice, support for the oppressed and those affected by armed conflict, climate change and poverty

MAP References

1(3rd bullet) *“... building a community that is a space of healing and reconciliation, of comfort and refuge and a place of light”,*

3: *“Developing our relationship with God through our life of prayer and worship”, in particular*

3 b: *“We will use our liturgical resources and experience to engage with contemporary issues, including but not limited to peace and social justice issues, both through our response to immediate situations of concern and our regular pattern of services.*

6: *“Developing our relationships with, and our activity related to the global community and the global church”, in particular*

6 c: *“We will seek to work together with other organisations and agencies on issues of global development, justice and reconciliation in ways which use our complementary gifts and resources and are rooted in our community life.”*

6 e: *"We will work creatively with other parts of the St. Martin's organisation to present ourselves as an international community and to promote a co-ordinated and imaginative approach to issues of global concern."*
6 g: *"We will take seriously our responsibilities as members of a global community and seek to promote choices, practices and policies which contribute to global equality and the sustainability of resources."*

Suggested activities:

- Focus on stewardship of creation
- Specific and regular prayer focus on places of need, e.g. Darfur, Congo, Zimbabwe, Middle East, Burma, Iraq and Afghanistan
- Response, including public events to issues of international terrorism, modern slavery, the plight of refugees and asylum seekers
- Highlight issues of persecution faced by Christians in different countries

3. Proactively communicate externally and engage the congregation about these needs

MAP References:

3: *"Developing our relationship with God through our life of prayer and worship", in particular*

3 g: *"We will develop our tradition of broadcasting to provide liturgy of a high standard that is expressive of our values and beliefs, uses the breadth of relationships and resources within our community and engages imaginatively and realistically with contemporary issues."*

6: *"Developing our relationships with, and our activity related to the global community and the global church", in particular*

6 f: *"We will encourage a creative, intelligent and informed engagement with scripture both through our liturgy and our education programmes, and to develop new possibilities in our ecumenical and interfaith conversations and relationships."*

Internal reference: Goal A. Create a sense of responsibility to respond to international needs

Suggested activities:

- Use media such as broadcast services (BBC Radio 4, BBC World Service)
- Raise international profile through public services and platform
- Documents, news, pod casts and recordings on St Martin's website
- Create a space/rack for information, magazines and materials on international issues
- Create a display area for international issues in foyer including exhibition of photographs and pictures as part of the design of the new spaces
- Give an international focus to activities for young people and C-Club, Twirties, Archers, Meditation Groups

4. Continue to arrange a faith response when "things happen"

MAP References:

3: *"Developing our relationship with God through our life of prayer and worship", in particular*

3 b: *"We will use our liturgical resources and experience to engage with contemporary issues, including but not limited to peace and social justice issues, both through our response to immediate situations of concern and our regular pattern of services."*

6 e: *"We will work creatively with other parts of the St. Martin's organisation to present ourselves as an international community and to promote a co-ordinated and imaginative approach to issues of global concern."*

Suggested activities:

- Public acts of witness using portico, St Martin's steps and access to Trafalgar Square
- Prayerful solidarity with those in situations of emergency, crisis or poverty including continue to be used for vigils

- Services of remembrance, worship and specific services for survivors of tragedy

Goal B. Strengthen and develop partnerships to build community

Strengthening of existing links with partner churches came out from many and also use congregational links to engage with other churches that may be in particular need of support. Collaboration with other organisations and groups, including Anglican Communion, St Ethelburga's, Corrymeela, Christian Aid, Amnesty etc., formed another diverse set of suggestions for partnerships, to be developed, maintained and prioritised as they are meaningful at the time for the life of St Martin's and the partners, building on links through individual members of the congregation.

Finally, the need to engage and inform the congregation in partnership activities was echoed through the responses.

"as many partnerships as possible to show the inclusive nature of your ministry and mission"

"... becoming a partner in the process of social and spiritual transformation"

"work with like-minded others to try to develop a Christ-like vision of a better international order .."

Objectives:

1. Building meaningful reciprocal relationships with others

MAP References:

2 (4th bullet): *"Developing our relationships with, and our activity related to the global community and the global church"*

3: *"Developing our relationship with God through our life of prayer and worship"*

3 a: *"In our programme of collective worship, we will both continue to honour the traditions of our liturgical heritage and draw on the diversity of culture and the gifts of music, drama, art, literature and creativity found within our community and through our wider relationships."*

6: *"Developing our relationships with, and our activity related to the global community and the global church", in particular*

6 a: *"We will continue to nurture our international partnerships through prayer, the sharing of experiences and mutual learning and to raise awareness of these links within the St. Martin's community."*

6 c: *"We will seek to work together with other organisations and agencies on issues of global development, justice and reconciliation in ways which use our complementary gifts and resources and are rooted in our community life."*

6 f: *"We will seek to use our new spaces to reflect our international relationships and concerns and to enable debate, reflection, learning and action on these issues."*

Suggested activities:

- Joint activities with partners such as currently with St Ethelburga's, Helen Bamber Foundation, and the Corrymeela Community, sharing resources, and expertise and inviting speakers
- Strengthen existing links with partner churches including South Africa; Melanesia; Malawi; Hong Kong; Northern Ghana and Jamaica
- Maintain contacts for exchanges with other like minded organisations such as Lambeth Palace, the Anglican Communion Office, the Diocese of London, St Paul's Institute, Christian Aid,
- Support members of SMITF engaging in overseas activities

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Feedback and outcomes of the consultation on St Martin's international work 2007

- Showcase a particular partner initiative or organisation with literature available once or twice a year (e.g. St Egidio)
- Greater dialogue and greater cultural immersion in the experiences of partner churches in the developing world
- Visits of individuals / groups to St Martin's from other parts of the world and St Martin's to visit these partners (e.g. Choir tour to South Africa)
- Pilgrimages of faith to pray for international concerns

2. Continuing our small grants giving programme in support of communities, churches or projects overseas

MAP References:

6: *"Developing our relationships with, and our activity related to the global community and the global church", in particular*

6 a: *"We will continue to nurture our international partnerships through prayer, the sharing of experiences and mutual learning and to raise awareness of these links within the St. Martin's community."*

6 g: *"We will take seriously our responsibilities as members of a global community and seek to promote choices, practices and policies which contribute to global equality and the sustainability of resources."*

Suggested activities:

- Providing small grants to communities and projects most in need on a basis of individual merit but taking into account personal links existing in the congregation and partnerships at church level.
- Supporting partners in geographic areas where St Martin's has existing links such as China, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Malawi, Uganda, and the Holy Land.
- Focus on support for people affected by HIV/AIDS, young children's, women's and girls' access to education and training, and primary health care.

Goal C. Offering space and hospitality

This came out strongly in both internal and external consultations and included a number of issues: to provide hospitality for those visiting or coming to St Martin's from a diverse variety of national and cultural backgrounds; to engage in multi/inter-faith dialogue; be open to and include the voiceless, marginalised and excluded; provide neutral ground for conflict resolution and a spectrum of opinion to be aired and heard.

"continue to provide a welcome" [in context of a number of suggested areas]

"show solidarity and friendship across faiths"

Objectives:

1. Promote Christian dialogue between those from different faith perspectives

MAP References:

3: *"Developing our relationship with God through our life of prayer and worship", in particular*

3 f: *We will encourage a creative, intelligent and informed engagement with scripture both through our liturgy and our education programmes, and to develop new possibilities in our ecumenical and interfaith conversations and relationships.*

Suggested activities:

- Welcome those of all faiths and those of none, particularly bringing together Christians, Muslim and Jews to build on areas of commonality

- Welcome pilgrims from the Anglican Communion and other traditions seeking signs of hope
- Provide hospitality for the Lambeth Conference and in the run-up

2. Build a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic community welcoming all ethnic groups including the voiceless, marginalised and excluded, refugees and asylum seekers

MAP References:

3: *“Developing our relationship with God through our life of prayer and worship”, in particular*

3 c: *“We will seek to make use of appropriate internal and external resources in providing opportunities to foster individual and corporate prayer life, and to nurture our discipleship.”*

4: *“Developing our relationships within our Church community and as part of the wider St. Martin’s organisation”, in particular*

4 b: *“We will seek to develop the relationships between the English-speaking and Chinese congregations through shared worship, conversation, social gatherings and educational events.”*

5: *“Developing our relationships locally as a city centre church, including our ministry to visitors”, in particular*

5 a: *“We will seek to work co-operatively across all parts of the St. Martin’s organisation to develop the ministry of welcome provided by staff and volunteers, and to support this by ongoing programmes of training.”*

Suggested activities:

- Welcome visitors, groups and tourists to look around the Church, for services and talks
- Welcome all people, including refugees, who want to come into the Church to sit, to pray, to ask for intercessions
- Musical and social events in the Crypt to reflect world themes in food and music (e.g. Jamaican Day, Pacific Day)
- Continue to develop retreat days to give spiritual support for asylum seekers and refugees and provide spiritual counselling and prayer support.
- Retreat days on international themes for English-speaking and Chinese Congregations and open to wider community.

3. Provide a platform for debate on controversial issues

MAP References:

6: *“Developing our relationships with, and our activity related to the global community and the global church”, in particular*

6 c: *“We will seek to work together with other organisations and agencies on issues of global development, justice and reconciliation in ways which use our complementary gifts and resources and are rooted in our community life.”*

Suggested activities:

- Listen learn, raise issues, facilitate, pray, private reflection
- Explore sacred texts in various ways e.g. scriptural reasoning
- Public debate to understand different perspectives: gender issues, sexuality
- Conflict Resolution Workshops

Goal D. Being true to the gospel ourselves

The need to be ‘true to the Gospel’ came out in a number of ways. Various suggestions were made as to how we could live this out from improving the fair-trade status of the SMITF Shop to bearing public witness to injustice.

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“Heeding Gospel call to work for justice”

“Being authentic not just fashionable” [in the context of affirming Christian faith as part of inter/multifaith dialogue]

“To ensure that the Christian message of non-judgemental love is maintained when deciding priorities”

Objectives:

1. Practice what we preach!

MAP References

4: *“Developing our relationships within our Church community and as part of the wider St. Martin’s organisation”, in particular*

4 c: *“We will encourage and support conversation between the different elements of the St. Martin’s community (church, business and Connection) recognising the reality of our differences in experience, focus and emphasis and looking to develop areas where imaginative reflection and shared planning can be of mutual and collective benefit.”*

4 e: *“We will encourage an active engagement with and an accountability to the St. Martin’s Ethos and Values statement to find an appropriate framework for its practical application in all areas of St. Martin’s life.”*

Suggested activities:

- Based on discussions with SMITFL, seek to introduce and increase the sale of fair-trade goods in the SMITF Shop to achieve Fair Trade status
- Discuss discounted rates for use of facilities by those without financial resources and those of other faiths
- Review our own global/ecological responsibilities
- Establish and report on St Martin’s own “carbon footprint”

2. Review how we bear public witness to injustice and respond

MAP References

3: *“Developing our relationship with God through our life of prayer and worship”, in particular*

3 b: *“We will use our liturgical resources and experience to engage with contemporary issues, including but not limited to peace and social justice issues, both through our response to immediate situations of concern and our regular pattern of services.”*

Internal reference: see also Goal A. Create a sense of responsibility to respond to international needs

Suggested activities:

- Develop a resource booklet for Stewards, which could also be part of Stewards’ training and background materials
- Strengthen parishioners’ resolve to become “Friends of the Connection”
- Consider our own financial giving to international causes
- Reflect and report on how we allocate our budget and resources in relation to our priorities

Goal E. Promote a Christian, God-centred approach to international issues to transform lives globally and locally

This issue cuts across all of the above, substantive goals and reflects the strong agreement of the outcomes of the consultation with the central objective of the mission and key command of the MAP under its first point.

MAP References

1: Building a community which

- *“Is God-centred, with a wide vision of the Kingdom, enabling us to be a prophetic and challenging community, that enables the transformation both of individuals and society.*
- *Has a strong sense of connectedness both to the local and global, enabling it to be a distinctive witness to the Kingdom and so encouraging people to recognise the active presence of God in the world.*
- *Is a place of healing and reconciliation, of comfort and refuge and a place of light.”*

Marks of our international ministry would include:

- Impartiality and breadth of vision in what St Martin' does
- Maintaining the Christian message of non judgemental love towards individuals
- Highlighting the meaning of Christian social justice and the centrality of care for the poor in Christian teaching
- A Christian bold humility which recognises that all things are only possible through God's grace.

Resources

Many of the international initiatives will not incur additional expenditure or are self-financing. Where more funding is needed, the International Committee would initiate appropriate planning and budgeting for individual items. We have sought to make proposals which are substantive and goal-oriented and seek “in principle” endorsement. In terms of support from the PCC once the debt from the Renewal Project is cleared, the International Committee would wish to request an annual allocation of a small percentage of the overall budget to continue support for small scale community projects overseas.

Conclusion

It is clear that there is considerable support internally and externally for a distinctive St Martin's contribution to international work. While much of what is proposed is a continuation and expansion of work in which we are already involved, the strategy seeks to prioritise this within a framework which is consistent with MAP2007-10 and gives shape to important future developments. It is hoped that the PCC will endorse the overall goals and objectives and enable us to move forward in this exciting and challenging area.