

10 May 2021

To: Members
Irish Mission of Seventh-day Adventists

2021 IRISH MISSION SESSION

Dear Member

It is our hope and prayer that this letter finds you in good spirits as we continue to learn how to live and witness to God's glory during this challenging time. The words of Hebrews 10:24 should continue to guide us at this time to, *"spur one another on toward love and good deeds."*

Recently, the British Union Conference ("the BUC") Executive Committee approved a request from the Irish Mission ("IM") Executive Committee to bring the 2022 IM Session forward to the fourth quarter of 2021. The purpose of this letter is to give you a brief explanation as to why it was so important to do this and what this means for the Irish Mission.

Firstly, what does this mean practically? It means we will go through the same steps and processes as we did in 2019 to hold our regular Session. However instead of doing it in 2022 we are going to do it at the end of this year. The process will follow these steps:

1. Churches will elect delegates to the Irish Mission Session based on proportional representation and choose among their delegates those who will serve on the Recommendations Committee ("RecCom"). Companies and Groups will be asked to nominate members from each Company or Group for the IM Executive Committee to consider for election as delegates.
2. The RecCom will then meet to recommend to the delegates the Nominating Committee ("NomCom") and other standing committees, as necessary. Delegates will then be asked to approve the recommendations.
3. Once the NomCom is approved by the delegates, it will meet before the Session to put forward recommendations for Mission Sponsors and the Mission Executive Committee.
4. Delegates will then convene on the day of the Session to conduct the necessary business as we do during a regular Session. This includes voting on the reports from the NomCom and other committees and receiving reports from the different departments.

As you can see, there is no difference in this process to 2019, except that we are going to do it this year instead of 2022, but why?

The IM serves members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church across two countries, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Due to the differences in charity legislation in both countries, we are registered under different names in each country and operate under different forms of legislation.

In Northern Ireland we are registered as a charity under the name of the British Union Conference and operate using the Irish Mission Operating Policy. In the Republic of Ireland, we are registered as a charity under the name the Seventh-day Adventists Church in Ireland ("the SDACI") and we operate under the SDACI Constitution. In both instances the BUC is the controlling or beneficiary body.

In 2016, the BUC, under guidance from the IM Executive Committee and the General Conference, applied for derogation (an exemption from a rule of charity law) to the Charities Regulator in the Republic of Ireland so that the function of the Trustees of the SDACI would mirror the function of the Trustees of the IM Operating



Policy. The application for derogation required a resubmission of the SDACI constitution in line with the new charity laws in the Republic of Ireland. It was our hope that this application would have been approved in 2016 as the change would have coincided with the BUC Session in 2016 – a vital part of the change as you will soon come to see.

Unfortunately, the application for derogation was more complicated and required several authorities in the Republic of Ireland to consent. It caused a protracted period of negotiation and communication between the IM Officers and the different authorities in the Republic of Ireland. Finally, in 2020, our request for derogation, along with the updated SDACI Constitution, was approved and our re-registration will be completed in June 2021.

The next step involves synchronizing the IM Operating Policy with the five-year cycle of the SDACI and BUC Constitutions. The SDACI Constitution was created to model the five-year cycle of the BUC Constitution. Until this year, the BUC has made use of a three-year administrative cycle for the Missions, but the new “Model Operating Policies for Missions” allows Unions to change this timeframe. The incoming BUC Executive Committee will make this change to the IM Operating Policy after the BUC Session this year.

We are fortunate, therefore, that our re-registration as SDACI in the Republic of Ireland has coincided with this year’s BUC Session, causing the two constitutional cycles to synchronize. The last piece of the puzzle now is to synchronize the Irish Mission Operating Policy with the BUC and the SDACI five-year cycle by bringing the IM Session forward to the fourth quarter of 2021. If we don’t, it will cause major disruption in the way the Irish Mission can function in the Republic of Ireland under the SDACI Constitution and potentially place our status as a charity under unnecessary risk.

Synchronization will eliminate immediate and long-term conflicting legislation practices between the Irish Mission Operating Policy, the SDACI Constitution and the BUC constitution that will be detrimental to our work in the Republic of Ireland. It will more importantly help us to function effectively within the requirements of each country’s legislation without disrupting our objective to share the gospel with Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

We realize that the timeframe for calling and preparing for the IM Session is less than we have been used to in the past. However, we are still able to achieve this within the framework of the current IM Operating Policy. It does mean that we are asking churches to act quickly and provide us with the names of their delegates by the latest the first week in June 2021. Pastors have been given the numbers of delegates for each church and we kindly ask your assistance and support as we prepare for our regular Session to take place at the end of this year.

Pastor Jacques Venter will in due course publish a question-and-answer article on our website and a short video will be released sharing the contents of this letter. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Pastor Serb or Pastor Venter.

Yours kindly



Pastor Dan Serb
President



Pastor Jacques S Venter
Executive Secretary

