

Meeting between Philip McGarry and NIMMA on May 29 1997 at Bryson House.

- 1 No clear data on number of mixed marriages. Probably now above 10%.
- 2 25% of marriages in Stranraer involved couples from Northern Ireland. Many couples do not involve official Church at all.
- 3 Relatively few problems now with regard to the ceremony itself. There are still significant variations in local practice however.
- 4 Baptism is now the most difficult area. Twenty years ago joint baptisms took place. This no longer happens. All the Churches seem to see this as a "numbers game".
- 5 The Catholic Church has one priest in each Diocese with Specialist Responsibility. Edward Daly had one plus four alternatives. Bishop Hegarty does not have one and denies that there ever were any appointments!
- 6 Increasingly couples bring up their children as "ambidextrous". However there are problems, including in integrated schools, where children have to be reported to DENI as either Catholic or Protestant. NIMMA feels strongly about this.
- 7 Some of the Southern Bishops in the Catholic Church seems to be more relaxed than their Northern counterparts.
- 8 NIMMA do not like the census form which they feel is too rigid in its categorisations of religious groupings.
- 9 NIMMA welcomes the Housing Executives efforts to provide housing which is "not labelled". 8

CONCLUSION

NIMMA has adopted a relatively low key approach and has done a lot of work with clergy. They may however be willing to become somewhat more proactive. They feel very strongly about the concept of labelling and the numbers game played by the Churches. They would be interested for opportunities to address outside gatherings including the Alliance Party. A key member, Ken Dunn, is heavily involved in NICIE and is very committed to the anti-sectarian approach. He and Philip have arranged to keep in touch with the hope of developing issues of joint interest.