

ABSTRACT:

In 2023, the Church of Ireland launched *Pioneer Ministry in the Church of Ireland* as a way of 'reaching those with little or no connection to church.' This is a positive and important response to declining attendance and membership in parishes across the Church of Ireland and the initiative is supported by the House of Bishops and General Synod. In light of this development, the Church of Ireland will need to explore how it will navigate the relationship between traditional and pioneer ministry in a way that is mutually enriching and supportive. In this dissertation, I argue that we can find an example of a challenge with parallels to our current context in Luke's account of the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 where the ecclesiology of the Jewish church in Jerusalem was disrupted by the Spirit's movement in the lives of the Gentile Christians in Antioch. This event forced the early church to re-examine what it meant to live faithfully as Christians as they wrestled with whether or not the Gentile Christians had to be circumcised and Torah-observant in order to be considered part of God's people. Through desk research, this dissertation engages with the work of biblical scholars, theologians, missiologists and practitioners in order to discern how the process the early church engaged in and the conclusions they came to might inform the Church of Ireland's approach today. In particular, it emphasises the value that the early church placed on the pursuit of unity, the practice of integrated discernment, and the importance of Christian distinctiveness.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Chapter 0

i. What is

ii. The H

iii. Our C

a. R

b. E

c. A

Chapter 1

i. The L

ii. Theo

iii. Exeg

a. I

b. J

c. J

d. '

Chapter 2

i. He

ii. Ap

a.

b.

c.

Conclusi

Bibliog