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Irish Ecumenical News

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*An occasional ecumenical information resource for the 3,250 faith communities of the 16 churches in membership with the Irish Inter Church Meeting and Irish Council of Churches (*see below); for an informal network of local and regional inter-church groups; and for interested laity and clergy on the island of Ireland and across the waters.*

Member Churches

The Catholic Church in Ireland, The Antiochian Orthodox Church in Ireland, The Church of Ireland, The Coptic Orthodox Church in Ireland, The Greek Orthodox Church in Ireland, The LifeLink Network of Churches, The Lutheran Church in Ireland, The Methodist Church in Ireland, The Moravian Church in Ireland, The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, The Religious Society of Friends, Rock of Ages Cherubim and Seraphim Church, The Romanian Orthodox Church in Ireland, The Russian Orthodox Church in Ireland, The Salvation Army (Ireland Division).

“An ecumenical resource for Christian pilgrims on the island of Ireland”



*Message from
**Archbishop Alan
Harper, Church of
Ireland Primate of
All Ireland***

A few months ago Ireland received a visit from the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches. Dr Kobia seems to inhabit a whirlwind propelling him on a frantic round of visits to countries around the globe. Speaking recently in Romania, he commented, “Now more than ever, the unity of the churches in Europe is needed to bear witness to a future that transcends the vision of a common economic and political future to embrace a future in which the abundant life in Jesus Christ gives hope to all people everywhere.” This is a profound and important observation which applies as much on this island as it does throughout Europe.

Six months after the inception of partnership government in Northern Ireland with all the excitement and the hope that has brought, and with the continuing strength of the seemingly indomitable Celtic Tiger in the Republic, that addiction to the sweet syrup of consumerism is strengthening its grip and dominates the agenda in the public space. It becomes more important than ever, therefore, for the churches to speak into the debate on the future shape and values of our society. Two things are clear: first, the days are gone when the churches can expect to have their opinions automatically accepted. Only on the basis of the quality of our argument shall we now receive a respectful hearing. And, second, we are much more likely to be listened to when we speak with a united voice, rather than when we appear to be divided. Denominational rivalry cuts little ice with government and business.

Perhaps it is time, therefore, for the churches to consult on exactly what sort of society Christians want. What values are too important to be set aside for any reason? What social objectives do we regard as essential in our rapidly changing society? What vision do we have for the future and how can we inspire others, including the movers and the shakers to share that vision? Furthermore, what about the casualties? The ones who can't cope? Who speaks for them? Who cares for them?

Thinking of casualties, who is more impoverished than he whom no acquisition can satisfy? They will be casualties too. We must be ready, together, to help people find that pearl of hope which even the wealthiest billionaire could never afford to buy. But are we?

*Further contact: Church House, 46 Abbey St, Armagh
BT61 7DZ*

Ecumenical congratulations to:

- **Rt Rev Alan Abernethy** as the new Church of Ireland Bishop of Connor; for details visit Bishop's page at www.connor.anglican.org
- **Rt Rev Tom Banham** as Moderator of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, visit www.nspresbyterian.org
- **Rev Wesley Blair** (Methodist) term as ICC representative on Regional Equality Liaison Panel of Dept of Health (NI) has been extended to March 2009
- **Rev Tom Carroll** recently ordained in Arbour Hill (Dublin) as the first Irish-born priest in the Greek Orthodox Church in Ireland
- **Rev Roy Cooper** as President of the Methodist Church of Ireland and in doing so

created history by becoming the first Methodist President anywhere in the world who had been installed in a Catholic Church – the Church of Incarnation in Cork.

- **Rev Professor Hugh Connolly** as President of Maynooth College
- **Rt Rev John Finlay** as Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- **George Glenn** (Church of Ireland) to continue his term as ICC's nomination to the existing Civic Forum (NI) if it is reconstituted
- **Rev Paul Hoey** (Church of Ireland) as ICC's representative on Global Mission Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland for an initial 12 month period
- **Prof Cecil McCullough** (Presbyterian) as ICC's rep on Middle East Forum (CTBI)
- **Roberta McKelvey and Marian Woods** who have been co-opted to ICC Executive
- **Rev Professor Enda McDonagh** (Catholic) and **Very Rev Dr Ken Newell OBE** (Presbyterian) who have been appointed and installed as the first ecumenical canons by the Dean and Chapter of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. Full text of the sermon preached at the installation by Archbishop Harper on centre pages of *Gazette* 13 July 2007 or visit website www.gazette.ireland.anglican.org
- **Rev Duncan Myers** appointed as chaplain consultant to the Churches Commission for International Students (CTBI) and plans to visit educational chaplains in Dublin in the New Year – email: hatfield.chaplain@durham.ac.uk
- **Rev Dr Allen Sleith** has taken over from Rev Tony Davidson as convenor of the Inter-Church Relations Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland. We also welcome him onto the ICC Executive
- **Br. Stephen Smyth** recently started as General Secretary of Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS), the national ecumenical instrument formed in 1990 by nine member churches: Church of Scotland, Congregational Federation, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Salvation Army, Scottish Episcopal, Society of Friends, United Free Church and United Reformed Churches. Stephen is a member of the Marist Brothers and has worked for the past seven years as the Ecumenical Officer for Glasgow Churches Together. Email: stephensmyth@acts-scotland.org

Modern Ireland – Archbishop Sean Brady

At the end of a widely reported speech in Milwaukee on August 19th, Archbishop Brady summarised that the fundamental challenge for modern Ireland was, in his view, 'to retain the balance between the best of the old and the best of the new. This includes taking steps to build community and support for marriage and the family. It requires moving to a new maturity in public and media debate, where the importance of faith in the lives of so many Irish people, including many of the new Irish, is given due recognition and respect by the new forces of Irish culture...I believe that there are increasing signs that the secular project in Ireland has

failed to bring the happiness it promised or the answers to the really important questions of people's lives.' Source: Catholic Communications Office 17/8/07

A gift from the Irish churches

Brother Pascal from the Benedictine community in Rostrevor, Co Down created a one metre long candle and presented this to the Irish ecumenical bodies to honour the theme of this European Ecumenical Assembly: ***The Light of Christ shines on all – Hope for renewal and unity in Europe***' (John 8.12). The candle was lit for the first time on 10th November 2006 during the opening worship at the Irish Inter Church Meeting held at the Emmaus centre near Dublin.

Over the past ten months, this candle has been on a discrete pilgrimage covering several thousand kilometres all around the island. It has been lit at 30 inter-church and special occasions from Belfast to Cork, from Dublin to Limerick, from Drogheda to Donegal, from Armagh to Dundalk; from the interfaces in North Belfast to those in West Belfast; from Dublin's north side to its south side; from inner city, to suburbs, to rural and cross-border communities. It has brought together over 3,000 people from a rich variety of church tradition and from both political jurisdictions. It has been the focus for Christians from Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Reformed, Evangelical and Pentecostal backgrounds on this island. Its light has shone on church leaders, lay people, civic leaders, as well as on those not engaged with church life.

It has been a focus of worship at large ecumenical gatherings at Ballymascanlon, Clonard-Fitzroy, Corrymeela, Glenstal and Greenhills, Lough Derg and Week of Prayer for Christian Unity services; annual church conference of member churches; local inter-church prayer services, community carol services, schools and theological colleges; inter-faith events; community interfaces; public lectures and community meetings with politicians. It shone into the darkness of our divisions, our brokenness and fragmentation, our suffering and pain. It shone over our walls of injustice, separation and exclusion.

The 32 delegates from these Irish churches bring this ecumenical symbol to the Romanian churches in the spirit of love and unity in which it was created and shaped on this island. May it inspire you in your worship, be an instrument in breaking down any barriers between yourselves and remind you of our love and interconnectedness in the Body of Christ within Europe. Alleluia.

(an edited version of a letter translated into Romanian and presented to the Romanian churches hosting the Third Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu earlier this month – full copy available from the Belfast office)

Glenstal Ecumenical Conference 2007

(by Fr Kieran Flynn SPS)

"There was something different about the Glenstal Ecumenical Conference ***"All People Praise the Lord"*** in June this year. I could describe it as more of an encounter with *New Irish Faith Communities* in their distinctiveness, unselfconsciously *being* themselves and *doing* their thing. The Benedictine hospitality and

centuries-old tradition of chanting the office were sublime, but in encountering contemporary and different faith representatives, one couldn't but help feeling another Ireland emerging and finding a voice.

Rev. Katherine Meyer helped us to acknowledge that as faith communities, we are all in transition, all are called to cross borders, that is both a longing and a grieving for an enlarged life in the Spirit. Fr. Godfrey O' Donnell and Fr. George Zavershinsky introduced us to dialogue in the Orthodox faith. Within the Romanian and Russian Orthodox communities, faith is experienced as beauty and devotion in the Liturgy. Here dialogue takes place within the principles of inclusion and hospitality.

Dr. Mamoun Mobayed explained the presence of an Islamic heritage all around us and our indebtedness and interconnected-ness to a Faith Tradition that has given us soap and coffee and much more besides. Ms. Doaa Baker presented herself as an example of somebody capable of inhabiting the multiple identities, Irish and Shi'a-Muslim, confidently and faithfully.

Mrs. Chinwe Obadeyi and Dr. Taiwo Matthew surprised us with their creativity and distinctive Christian Evangelical heritage. Both were conscious of their Nigerian roots and the place of Irish missionaries in their faith development. However they saw themselves as having a distinct return mission to Ireland that was scriptural and unapologetic.

In his reflections for the road ahead, Prof. John D'Arcy May acknowledged the presence of new life stirring in the Irish religious scene and the challenge to all to negotiate the necessary adjustments, that all may deepen in the spirit of Glenstal to become truly ecumenical".

(Further details about next year's conference from Peter Denison-Edson,
Email: peter123denison@gmail.com)

Intercultural resource to parishes/local faith communities

(from Parish-based Integration Project, contact Adrian Cristea ph. Dublin (0)1.269.0951, email adrian@iccs.ie)

All welcoming experiences can be stressful and sometimes misunderstandings occur, but ultimately, they are fruitful, exciting and energizing. They require initiative and patience on the part of all who participate, but above all, the creation of a new intercultural community requires us to be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Go-Between God. We hope the following suggestions will be of assistance to you:

1. In order to provide a meaningful welcome to newcomers in your area, a thorough research of the local circumstances may need to be undertaken.
2. The welcoming process should involve the clergy, parish council, as well as the rest of the congregation. Hospitality should not be so much on the cultural terms of the hosting group, but also must make sense to group being hosted.

3. Make sure that the outside image of your church looks appealing to newcomers of various ethnic backgrounds. The use of attractive notice boards and information translated in relevant languages are very helpful.
4. Symbols of welcome are important. Use an adequate display of symbols and messages of welcome. Stress on the universal dimension of welcome and emphasize your church as a church for all nations.
5. When nominating people to welcome newcomers, careful consideration should be taken as to ensure their suitability to greet people on arrival and help people feel at home in church. Insist on learning people's names correctly.
6. Use plain English language in services as it helps those with limited language skills to participate better and incorporate into the worship elements (such as a prayer or ritual) from the countries represented in the congregation/parish.
7. The establishment of music and praise groups with responsibility for some of the music in worship are very effective. They can learn praise songs in a variety of languages representing the diversity of the congregation.
8. Occasional shared meals where everyone is invited to contribute food create a focus for working together and share cultural heritage. Different cultural groups can learn about Irish culture and share their own.
9. Establish joint Bible study in order to help develop relationships and promote an understanding of different perspectives or explore common roots. Encourage Irish families to invite and visit newcomers in their homes.
10. Promote the participation of newcomers in leadership, interest or project groups as this will develop a sense of belonging and people also need to feel understood and appreciated for the richness which they bring.

Ramadhan Advice

(Source: CAIRS Issue 23 August 2007)

Every year in the month of Ramadhan, all Muslims fast from first light until sundown, abstaining from food & drink. Those who are sick, elderly, or on a journey, and women who are pregnant or nursing are permitted to break the fast and make up an equal number of days later in the year. If they are physically unable to do this, they must feed a needy person for every day missed. Children begin to fast (and to observe the prayer) from puberty, although many start earlier. Although the fast is most beneficial to the health, it is regarded principally as a method of self-purification. By cutting oneself off from worldly comforts, even for a

short time, a fasting person gains true sympathy with those who go hungry as well as growth in one's spiritual life. The end of Ramadan is celebrated with the Eid ul Fitr. On this day, Muslims go to the mosque for a special congregational prayer. Families & friends visit each other, exchange gifts and socialize throughout the day. In some areas there are local functions and festivals.

What can organisations and businesses do?

Simple adjustments can alleviate difficulties for the Muslim colleague or client and result in greater productivity and a sound working/business environment.

- Ramadan is around 12th/13th September 2007 for 30 days (based on the lunar calendar)
- The fast commences between 4am & 5am and concludes between 7pm & 8pm (based on the rising & the setting of the sun)
- Raise awareness of Ramadhan amongst staff and it's implications for the organisation and Muslim colleagues/ clients
- Avoid food and drinks trolleys/ points near Muslim colleagues
- Avoid working lunches
- Muslims colleagues may require to take a short (10-15 minute) break at sunset to break their fast and pray
- Consider concessions for Muslim colleagues work during their lunch breaks in return for an later start/finish
- Ensure your canteen caters for Muslims at the times of keeping/opening their fast
- Evening functions can be difficult for Muslims to attend due to evening prayers at all mosques
- Muslim colleagues may look for time of at the end of Ramadhan for Eid at short notice (around 12th/13th October, based on the lunar calendar)
- Set up an office/organisation Iftar (fast breaking) function for all to join in with.
- Get others to fast on a given day and raise money for charity (<http://www.isb.org.uk/pages06/f2r.asp>)

Further details: Andrew Sarle, Inter-Faith Education Officer, Churches Agency for Interfaith Relations in Scotland, email: andrew@cairs.org.uk, www.cairs.org.uk

World Council of Churches Central Committee (by Rev Dr Heather Morris - *Methodist Church in Ireland*)

It was a privilege to be a Methodist delegate to the 9th WCC Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and to be elected to serve on the Central Committee of the WCC. The Central Committee meets every eighteen months with the remit of carrying forward and implementing the recommendations of the Assembly, its next meeting will take place in February 2008. The Executive committee meets between meetings of the Central Committee.

The work of the WCC has many strands, simply to highlight two: the Middle East has been a key focus for the WCC since Porto Alegre. Following a resolution

from the Central Committee in September 2006, a Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum is being created. Secondly, we are now moving into the second half of the Decade to Overcome Violence. It is likely that an Ecumenical Peace Declaration will be developed for 2011. While it is recognised that this will not be a consensual statement like Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, it is hoped that it will be recognised as an act of public witness.

Amidst the meetings and many papers which emanate from the WCC, my over-riding impression is of an organisation that still has great potential to influence the thinking of the Church and of governments and other agencies. That significance, it seems to me, is sometimes lost on us in this part of the world, but it means a great deal to others. My concern about the WCC focuses on its' relevance to individual national and local ecumenical initiatives'. How relevant is what the WCC says or does to local ecumenical relationships and discussion? The visit of Dr Sam Kobia to Ireland in May 2007 was a sign of the WCC's concern to build those national links.

My plea would be that if you are aware of ways in which the WCC could serve you, or ways in which what happens in WCC Assemblies and committees can be better integrated with local activities, that you would contact me at:

E-mail: heather.morris@irishmethodist.org

News around the island

Ardfallen Scripture Garden in Cork

Based on a common Methodist symbol, an outdoor prayer room has been created in the grounds of Cork Methodist Church in Ardfallen. It is laid out in seven beds with plant species familiar in biblical times to people in the Holy Land. Visit: <http://homepage.eircom.net/wesleyardfallen>, ph Lucy at 00353 (0)52.42058

Ballycastle Church Action

The Catholic, Church of Ireland and Presbyterian churches in Ballycastle have a long history of mutual acceptance and friendship with annual ecumenical services celebrating key events in the Christian calendar. To consolidate and build on this friendship, a Church Action group was established in 2005 by representatives from all the major churches, their respective clergy and others involved in a personal capacity. It is in the process of registering as a Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable status. BCA is about to begin a 'Good Morning Ballycastle' project, a telephone support service for the elderly and vulnerable, with funding from the Northern Health and Social Services Board. A part-time project co-ordinator is now in post, and the group are building a bank of volunteers for this and other projects. Further details: David Quinney Mee (Secretary), c/o 60, Ann Street, Ballycastle, Co Antrim BT54 6AD, ph: 028 2076 2225 (office hours)/028 2076 2959 (home); email: dral.qm@virgin.net

Benedictine Community, Rostrevor, Co Down

'Our community comes from the Abbey of Bec in France. We were sent by our Benedictine Congregation of St. Mary of Monte Oliveto in 1998 to establish a monastic foundation in Northern Ireland. We have established strong links within the wider Christian community; our outreach to the Churches has been greatly appreciated and reciprocated. Our monastic presence in this country is a gesture of communion. It seeks to respond to a call addressed by the Church to monasteries of contemplative life to engage themselves in the mission of spiritual ecumenism, rooted in prayer, conversion of heart and charity, in those corners of the world where Christians are divided. The Foundation Decree of Holy Cross Monastery states that *'Our particular mission is to contribute to reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants in a land marked by reciprocal violence and stained by the blood of Christian brothers and sisters'*. Hospitality is a very significant aspect of Benedictine life. The monastery welcomes men and women of all denominations and backgrounds, many of whom come to spend some days of retreat with the community.' Further details from Dom Mark-Ephrem Nolan OSB, 119 Kilbroney Rd, Rostrevor, Co. Down BT34 3BN, ph.028.4173.9979, email: benedictinemonks@btinternet.com website www.benedictinemonks.co.uk

Briefing paper on Ireland

Dr David Stevens has recently updated his general guide (47 pages) to the Troubles in Northern Ireland. It includes an historical introduction, a chronology of the Troubles, some of the main groups and political parties, information on the churches and different religions in Ireland, a few statistics on religions etc. Further information on www.corrymeela.org

Christian Enquiry Agency

This agency of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland provides a central point of contact for information about Jesus Christ and responds to each enquiry individually. More than 42,000 have contacted the agency to date. Email: cea@christianity.org, www.christianity.org.uk, or visit www.rejesus.co.uk

Church and Society (Churches Together in Britain and Ireland)

Mary Gandy, who holds responsibilities for Church and Society and as Deputy General Secretary of CTBI, paid a visit to Ireland in August which included attending the meeting of the Inter-Church Committee on Social Issues (ICCSI) in Dundalk where she spoke about her work and how social issues are dealt with by the members of CTBI. She also visited a number of church and religious projects in Dublin, Maynooth and Belfast. Her contact details: ph 0044(0)20.7654.7227. Further details: visit www.ctbi.org.uk

Corrymeela Knocklayd, Co Antrim

A warm and welcoming hillside oasis on the slopes of Knocklayd mountain. Available to individuals and groups up to 16. Home-cooked meals or self catering. Programme of weekend courses and quiet days available from resident volunteers (Chris & Mary-Anne Busch), ph 028.20751521,

Email: knocklayd@corrymeela.org

Cut the Carbon March

As part of Christian Aid's campaign drawing national attention to climate change and the need to slash the UK's carbon output, a group of walkers set out from N. Ireland on July 14 on an 80 day, 1000 mile walk through the UK to raise awareness of the issues with local communities, media and politicians. The March will end on October 2nd at the London Stock Exchange and a service of thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral. Christian Aid is looking for churches to continue to lobby as the campaign continues in the autumn when Westminster MPs debate the Climate Change Bill. Further details: www.christian-aid.org.uk or their local offices (see below)

Directory of Irish Ecumenism – an invitation to respond

Plans to compile this over the summer have been postponed due to the difficulties in obtaining information from the rich variety of formal and informal inter-church and other ecumenical groupings around the island (NB. Thanks to those who did respond). Your group is again invited to send their name and contact details (phone, email) to the Irish Inter Church Centre (contact details on the front page), so we can start to build a website profile of what's happening ecumenically on the ground, share ideas/resources and encourage further e-networking amongst 'the household of God'.

Down and Connor Ecumenical Commission

has recently published a Directory of Best Practice for distribution throughout the parishes of this Catholic Diocese and also to other interested ecumenical groups. The Directory comprises entries from parishes, individuals engaged in ecumenical activities and other articles of an ecumenical nature. Limited copies are available to interested readers. Please send a large SAE to the Diocesan Secretary for Ecumenism, Fr Colin Grant, St Malachy's College, 36 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 2AE.

Franciscan mission, Limerick

Br. Shawn O'Connor (superior) from New York and four other Franciscans from France, Germany and USA recently established the first Irish Friary of the Renewal when they moved into Delmege Park in the Moyross housing estate. Founded by 8 Capuchin friars in New York in 1987 with a primary mission of serving the poor, the order has bases in the Bronx, Harlem, New York, London, Honduras and Albuquerque. Further details from St Patrick's Friary, ph 00353 (0)61.458071.

Handwritten Bible

Both Bible Societies in Ireland have completed their challenge of continuing this Bible-copying tradition as a way of celebrating their 200th anniversary. Over the past 12 months, over 10,000 people in churches and schools in Northern Ireland have written a few verses at 190 writing stations, while almost the same number have been involved at 135 writing stations in the Republic. Contributors have ranged from the age of 3

to 95+. In the Republic, 66% of contributors were aged less than 17 years. The complete handwritten text of each Bible will be bound for public exhibition throughout the island as a reminder of how the Scriptures were preserved for our generation and continue to be a source of inspiration. Further information from the Bible Society in NI at www.bsni.co.uk (John Doherty, ph. 028.9032.6577) and in the Republic at www.biblesociety.ie (Judy Wilkinson ph. 00353.1.677.3272)

Hymn writing competition

The Hard Gospel Project is inviting musicians and songwriters to write a hymn that encapsulates the values of the hard Gospel 'to love God and your neighbour as yourself' and submit this to their Dublin office by 1st December. The winning hymn's world premiere will be sung by the Discovery Gospel choir at the Hard Gospel Immigration Conference at the Emmaus Centre, Co Dublin on 18-19 January. Further details from: www.hardgospel.net, ph. 00353(0)87.1325531, Email: philipmckinley@hardgospel.net

Inter-Church Centre, 48 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast
A warm welcome to Jill Marrs (Administrator, Embrace NI) who moved into one of the offices this month and joins colleagues from TIDES in sharing the fellowship, common life and facilities of the Centre. Visit www.embraceni.org, ph 079699.21328

Irish Bible Institute

This Institute has a vision for gospel-centred churches making an impact for Christ across Ireland and aims to serve the Church through biblical education and leadership development. Further details: ph. Dublin 01.806.9060, email info@ibionline.ie, www.ibionline.ie

Irish Christian Writers' Fellowship

The Irish Christian Writers' Fellowship was formed as a result of a course on Christian writing held in 1983 at the Irish Bible School, Coalbrook, Co.Tipperary. "We have from time to time produced anthologies and run competitions, literary evenings and training courses. We meet together as regularly as is possible with regard to our difficulty in finding a suitable venue and five or six times a year, we produce a small presentation of members' work, now called "*The Candlestick*". There is a suggested minimum annual subscription of €15 (Concessions €10), due every year in January." Further information: Joan Bradley, Secretary, Flat 2C, Iveagh Trust, Kevin Street, Dublin 8; ph/fax: 01.454.9237, email: secretary@ppsq.ie

Irish Council of Churches – priorities 2008

On 29th August, ICC Executive agreed to give priority in 2008 to progressing a number of internal issues (Presidency, church membership, communication strategy, engaging with non-member churches, registration as a limited company) and shared issues (use of property, Irish ecumenical directory, approval in principle of an ecumenical staff position in the Republic, identify expertise to make submissions on ethics, develop some open ecumenical events, the future of Churches Peace Education Programme, responding to European Union issues, further

developing the website). Dates for meetings in 2008 have also been agreed.

Irish Inter-Church Committee

Amongst a full agenda of business at the next IICC meeting on September 28, consideration will be given to discuss sub-group reports on: a suggested remit for IICC for 2008-2010; a proposal for a new ecumenical appointment in the Republic; the recent European Ecumenical assembly in Sibiu and how this might best be shared with the Irish churches at grassroots level; the future of the Irish Inter Church Centre in Belfast; dates and focus of meetings in 2008.

Irish Missionaries

There are nearly 4,000 Irish missionaries working in 93 countries around the world and the Irish Missionary Union publish a Report four times a year which is sent to them and others interested in mission. Further details: www.imu.ie, ph Dublin (0)1.492.3326

Jethro Centre

A modern parish and community centre with meeting rooms and a conference hall for 400 people has recently been opened by the Shankill Parish Caring Association in Lurgan. Its aim is to promote peace, harmony and wellbeing for all the inhabitants in the district, based on the principles of Justice, Excellence, Tolerance, Healing, Reconciliation and Outreach. Further details: Trevor Douglas (Centre Manager), Jethro Centre, Flush Place, Lurgan BT66 7DT, ph 028.3832.5673, email reception@jethrocentre.org

Norwegian Lutherans visit Belfast

A group of employers and staff from the Church of Norway will be visiting Belfast in late September to learn more about Irish ecumenism, peace education and the local culture. Their visit will include attending local church services and meeting with members of ICC and IICC at the Inter Church centre on Monday, October 1st.

Oak House Ecumenical Fellowship / Dairthech

This Fellowship was formed in 1994 by a small group of members from local Catholic and Reformed churches in the middle of Co Galway who were interested in prayer, healing, reconciliation and meeting under a pre-Reformation name. It gathers twice a month for prayer, Bible study and meetings with invited speakers. Its programme includes an annual retreat, visits and a pilgrimage of discovery to deepen its fellowship and grow in faith. Further details: Claire Besnyoe, Ballydugan, Loughrea, Co Galway, ph 00353(0)91.843.004

Out of the Depths

This resource draws on five psalms to help groups reflect on the consequences of the Troubles 'as we live with enduring divisions in a post-Troubles, but not yet post-conflict society.... Remembering past hurt and wrongdoing is essential to healing and justice, for only by remembering can we begin the difficult and courageous journey towards forgiveness and the possibility of reconciliation with our enemies.' Available from www.contemporarychristianity.org/resources/outofthedepts

Overseas development agencies

For the latest news about contributions made by the Irish member churches to overseas development:

Christian Aid Ireland has seven sponsoring Irish churches (Church of Ireland, Methodist, Moravian, Non Subscribing Presbyterian, Presbyterian churches, Religious Society of Friends, and Salvation Army) and can be contacted through its Belfast office ph. (0044).028.9038.1204, by email: belfast@christian-aid.org; through its Dublin office (00353).01.611.0801, email dublin@christian-aid.org; or visit its website www.christian-aid.ie.

Trocaire, the official overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland, can be contacted from Northern Ireland by Freephone on 0800.912.1200 or from the Republic on Call Save ph. 1850.408.408, email info@trocaire.ie; or visit its website www.trocaire.org

The National Suicide Bereavement Support

Network Detailed information on support groups for people who have been bereaved through suicide. Visit www.nbsn.org

Resourcing churches

Check out a new website with downloadable resources to help everyday worship and congregational life in urban and rural parishes:

www.resourcingchurches.org.uk

These have been developed collaboratively by five Scottish churches (Baptist, Church of Scotland, Methodist, Scottish Episcopal Church and the United Reformed Church).

Romanian Orthodox

A message of prayerful support was sent to the leaders of the local Romanian Orthodox congregation in Dublin when the news of the death of their 92 year old Patriarch, His Beatitude Teoctist, was announced on July 30th. Tributes can be located on websites of World Council of Churches and Conference of European Churches.

School for Social Entrepreneurs in Ireland

Fifteen bursaries for the School's Advanced Diploma in Social Enterprise are available to those either residing in or working for an organisation/church that focuses on the Targeted Social Need areas of Belfast, or those groups disadvantaged by the conflict. Further details: Carmel Heaney 028.9032.8918 or visit www.sse.org.uk

Social analysis and Theological reflection

The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice undertakes research, social analysis and critical reflection in the light of the Gospel and Christian social teaching on issues that are relevant to community, low income and other marginalised groups. The Centre works on issues of equity in Irish society, homelessness, young people at risk, refugee and asylum seekers, international debt and social spirituality. It lobbies for a more just society and culture. Further details www.cfi.ie, ph 00353(0)1 855.6814, email info@cfj.ie

Study day on Theological Ecumenism

Dr Mary Tanner (European President of the World Council of Churches) will be the keynote speaker at this study day being organised by the Irish Inter Church Committee on October 24 at the Emmaus Centre, Co Dublin. An invited group of staff and students from eight theological colleges across the island will be joining ecumenical partners and church leaders represented on IICC and ICC Executive. The day's theme, '*The world on our doorstep ; exploring developments in theological ecumenism from global and local perspectives*' will bring together some of the Irish voices contributing to international and local commissions involving Catholic, Church of Ireland, Lutheran, Methodist and Reformed churches, as well as to other bilateral dialogues taking place around the world. Further details will soon be available on the ICC website.

Useful websites on Care of Environment

(Greening the Church Issue 1 from Ecological and Environmental Panel of Church of Ireland's Church in Society Committee; and other sources):

Ways of reducing your carbon footprint:

www.seql.org/100ways.cfm

Some Irish energy solutions: www.ecoireland.ie/asp/
CO2 emission levels of every country in the world:

www.breathingearth.net

Eco-friendly products to buy on line: www.resolve-uk.com/Products/products_index.

Ireland's largest supplier of environmentally friendly products: www.ecoshop.ie

C of E's environmental stewardship:

www.shrinkingthefootprint.cofe.anglican.org

A Rocha (Christians in conservation): www.arocha.org

CEL Christian Ecology Link (multi-denominational):

www.christian-ecology.org.uk

Eco-Congregation Ireland:

www.ecocongregationireland.org

Environmental Issues Network (CTBI):

www.ctbi.org.uk/chsoc/ein.html

Operation Noah (climate change campaign):

www.operationnoah.org

Website launch: www.irishchurches.org

After many years of neglect, we are hoping to secure approval from the member churches to launch a new website format this autumn. The intention will be to use this as the main communication medium between member churches, ecumenical groups and the wider community on this island and further afield. We will need to think through how this will impact on future editions of *Irish Ecumenical News* as we are aware how important it is for many of our readers to have a hard copy to read. Your views are welcomed as we develop our communications strategy.

Zero 28

This project emerged from student discussions at Queens University in the early 1990's as a NI-based movement (hence its NI name 028 from the telephone book) that was committed to social change 'based on the teachings of Jesus, trying to make a difference through active non-violence, reflections on peace and justice, social ethics and the environment.' It closed this summer with 'its fragile community of fellow

travellers' moving on having made some significant contributions to challenging racism and homophobia, non-violent change and creating activist responses to needs of the local context.

Resources for Women

Al-Nisa Association (NI)

Established in 1998 as a support group for Muslim women in Northern Ireland to address specific issues they face and working to promote a better understanding, integration and cohesion between communities. Details of their information pack '*Muslim Culture and Traditions*' and book on '*Muslims in NI – their contributions and achievements with a historical introduction*' (£5 each plus P&P) can be obtained from their office at 46 Mount Eden Park, BT9 6RB, ph. 028.9022.8135 / 9068.1666 or www.al-nisa.org.uk

The Olive Branch

Leaders of the Mothers' Union (Church of Ireland), Methodist Women in Ireland, Presbyterian Women's Association have been meeting every few months for the past couple of years to 'explore their shared ministry of women to others and to develop pathways towards a reconciled community.' Drawn together through the Methodist reconciliation project based at Edgehill Theological College in Belfast, encounters have been set up with various speakers and community groups to listen and deepen awareness of each others' stories and experiences. Further detail: Scott Boldt, ph. 028.9068.6933

Parish resources from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland /CTBI:

Racial Justice Sunday (September): This year's theme '*People on the Move*' will be marked in many churches in Britain and Ireland with an emphasis on migration, asylum seekers, refugees, economic migrants and Christians who have come to these islands from other countries. Resource packs include prayers, Bible readings, sermons and discussions, activities for young people. These can be obtained from CTBI Publications (£3.50 plus p&p) at www.mph.org.uk or for €5.25 from Refugee Project, Columba house, Maynooth, Co Kildare, ph.(0)1.505.3157

Centenary of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18-25 January 2008)

'Pray without ceasing' (1 Thessalonians 5.12-18) is the theme chosen for the 100th anniversary of this Week of Prayer. Shaped by a group in the USA where an Episcopalian Franciscan priest (Fr Paul Watson) first inspired the idea, and using an image from Ground Zero, this year's resource materials have again been adapted by writers from Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England. They include ideas for worship, songs, visual aids and activities drawing on environmental and migration themes. From October 2007, these can all be downloaded for free from www.ctbi.org.uk . Also for the first time, there will be an Irish translation (prepared by Fr Myles Rearden CM) which can be obtained from the same source. Written

pamphlets, posters and prayer cards can still be ordered with P&P from CTBI Publications, 4 John Wesley Rd, Werrington, Peterborough PE4 6ZP, ph. 0044.(0)1733.325002, email sales@mph.org.uk Do let us know the details of what's being planned in your community so we can promote it through our website at www.irishchurches.org

Lenten series 2008

A new innovative media resource is being prepared by CTBI that draws on the treasures of six major strands of Christian spirituality, each with its own pathway to worship God. Further details later in the autumn will be available from www.ctbi.org.uk

Resources across the water

Christian Institute

Charity promoting Christian values and influence in public policies, especially relating to the family and education. It challenges secular humanism and religious pluralism. Visit www.christian.org.uk

Church Action on Poverty

CAP is marking its 25th anniversary to continue its work for lasting solutions to poverty. It invites churches to participate in its Poverty and Homelessness Action Week (26 Jan-3 Feb) and in its Just Church programme as a resource for Lent Study groups in 2008. Further information: www.church-poverty.org.uk, ph 0044.(0)161.236.9321

Edinburgh 2010

Planning has started to commemorate the centenary of the 1910 Edinburgh world mission conference that inspired the contemporary ecumenical and mission movements. The conference will be held in Edinburgh from 12-15 June 2010 under the theme '*Serving God's mission together*'. It will be organised by a broad coalition of world churches, mission organisations and ecumenical bodies, including the WCC. There will be nine mission themes ranging from Christian mission among other faiths, to mission and unity, mission and power, mission and authentic discipleship. A collaborative process will address these themes. A coordinating office staffed by Dr Daryl Balia (missiologist from South Africa) has been set up in the University of Edinburgh. Further details: www.ttc.edu.sg/csca/rart_doc/edinburgh2010.pdf; www.towards2010.org/uk/downloads

Hope 2008

Hope 2008 is about unity within the church – a year of united mission for every denomination, stream and ministry. Churches from every tradition in the UK are being invited to work together to witness the good news and share practical love with their neighbours in the place where they live during this 12-month period. Everyone's invited to get involved in their local community fun-days, missions, seminars, conferences, even festivals. 'Hope 2008 has the potential to fulfil Jesus' prayer in John 17, breaking down barriers between race, culture, and custom; and uniting the Church across the country.' Further details: www.hope08.com

RADAR

An informal group of church-based staff meets monthly in London to consider impending Westminster legislation and facilitate church responses. Chair rotates every six months, currently served by Mary Gandy (CTBI), email ch.soc@ctbi.org.uk

International ecumenical news

Agreeing a Code of Conduct on religious conversion for 2010

The World Evangelical Alliance is ready to join the World Council of Churches and the Vatican in supporting a code of conduct to guide activities seeking converts to Christianity. Launched in May 2006 as *'an inter-religious reflection on conversion: from controversy to a shared code of conduct,'* its promoters expect the code to 'be an advocacy tool in discussions with governments considering anti-conversion laws, address other religions concerns about Christian proselytism, and help ease intra-Christian tensions.' Further redrafting will be done during 2008 by those carrying responsibility for inter-religious dialogue from WCC and the Pontifical Council (source: wcc media 15.8/07)

Church of South India 60th anniversary

This Church was inaugurated on 27th September 1947 as a union of churches within Anglican, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian and Reformed traditions. It currently has 3.8 million members, 21 dioceses, 14'000 congregations, 2'000 schools, 130 colleges and 104 hospitals. 'The church explicitly recognises that Episcopal, Presbyterian and congregational elements are all necessary for the church's life. The Scriptures are the ultimate standard of faith and practice....' Further details: <http://csichurch.com>

Church and Society Commission meeting in Armenia (14-17 June)

Robert Cochran (convenor, Inter Church Committee on Social Issues) represented ICC at this meeting organised by one of the Conference of European Churches' commissions. About 40 people from a wide range of European Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican Churches met together as host of the Armenian Apostolic Church (Orthodox). The meeting was mainly concerned with issues of relevance for the churches arising from the European Commission and Parliament, as well as from the Council of Europe. This included such topics as European Integration, Family Policy, Human Rights and Religious Freedom, Corporate Social Responsibility, Environmental concerns, Employment issues, etc. The strong desire of the Armenian Church to be accepted as one of the family of European Churches was especially evident in the arrangements made by the Catholicos of the Church (equivalent to Patriarch) for Eucharistic hospitality to be extended to all the group (breaking with their own tradition in relation to this matter). Further information: email rochran@catalyst.ie

The Decade to Overcome Violence is an initiative of the World Council of Churches which aspires to move peace-building from the periphery to the centre

of the life and witness of the church. Every year there is a focus on a part of the world or a particular issue and 2007 is the Europe focus year, with the theme **"Make me a channel of your peace: Challenged to Overcome Violence in Europe"**. The aims of these focus years are to:

- **Encourage** churches regionally and locally in their efforts for peace and justice - express solidarity
- **Understand** the situation and challenges regionally and internationally - move beyond stereotypes
- **Celebrate** peace and reconciliation work being done in the region - highlight peace and justice

There are many resources and particular initiatives for congregations to get involved in and there is an e-newsletter with practical ideas and inspiration at www.overcomingviolence.org , Further information from Shona Fisher, email: shonaelspeth@yahoo.co.uk

Ecumenical Disability Advocacy Network

A useful WCC resource for people with disabilities which advocates for justice and inclusion. Their latest quarterly newsletter includes articles on 'Violence against Women with Disability', 'Doing Theology from Disability Perspective,' Disability and Personhood' and a directory of contacts. Further information: info@edan.org.ke . A copy of the newsletter is available at the Inter-Church Centre.

EEA3/ 3rd European Ecumenical Assembly (4-8 September in Sibiu, Romania)

Karen Kelly (ICC Administrator), Rev Colin Campbell (Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church) and Fr Godfrey O'Donnell (Romanian Orthodox) represented the Irish Council of Churches and joined 32 other Irish delegates at this European Assembly. Jointly organised by the Conference of European Churches (representing 125 Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox and Old Catholic churches in Europe) and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (Catholic), it brought together some 2,500 delegates from all over Europe, many of whom have been involved in the previous three stages in a process that has already taken 18 months. The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, preached at the opening service, while Cardinal Walter Kasper (Vatican) and Dr Mary Tanner (UK) were amongst the speakers within a packed programme of Bible meditations, forums, plenaries and cultural events. A **Final Message from the Assembly** was released on September 8th and brings 10 recommendations to European (and Irish) churches. These can be downloaded from www.eea3.org . The Irish delegates will be working out how they share their experiences and outcomes of this Assembly with the Irish churches at national and local levels.

G8 meeting in Germany

The Conference of European Churches joined religious leaders from the G8 countries that had gathered in Heiligendamm and agreed: to act together as a conscience of the leaders of the world's eight richest and most powerful nations; to speak out with a

strong united voices on the key issues of the day in such a way that their comments would be heard; and to call them to account for their failure to live up to their previous commitments (Gleneagles 2005) to help the world's poorest.

Source: CEC Monitor July 2007, p4

Global Christian Forum (6-9 November in Nairobi)

Representatives from the Anglican, Catholic, Evangelical, Orthodox, Pentecostal and Protestant churches met together for the first time in June in Santiago (Chile) in the last of four regional consultations preparing for this Global Christian Forum in Kenya.

The Forum will bring 240 leaders together for the first time representing the broadest range of all the main Christian traditions. Its main theme will be '*Our Journey with Jesus Christ, the reconciler*' and sharing our discernment on

- (i) what God is doing in our churches and
 - (ii) our place in God's mission in the world.
- Further detail on website:
www.globalchristianforum.net

Reconciliation amongst Oriental Orthodox churches

On 13 July, Pope Shenouda III and Catholicos Aram 1, the respective heads of the Coptic Orthodox and Ethiopian Orthodox churches, signed an agreement declaring 'their unity of faith, their commitment to common witness and their readiness to deepen collaboration', leaving behind more than two decades of tensions.

Source: WCC Media Weekly 13-19 July 2007

Russian Orthodox – unity restored

On Ascension Day (17 May), unity was restored between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia when an Act of Canonical Communion was signed in Moscow by Patriarch Alexy II and Metropolitan Lavr from New York. This marked the end of an eighty-year split created in 1917 when the onset of the communist revolution separated church members in the homeland from those in the Diaspora. (Sources: Orthodox News Summer 2007; www.synod.com/synod/engdocuments; www.sourozh.org/web/Act_of_reconciliation_signed)

Towards greater coherence of one ecumenical movement

A Joint Consultative Commission of global confessional families and the WCC met for the first time in Geneva on May 10. Those represented included Anglicans, Disciples, Eastern Orthodox, Friends/Quakers, Lutherans, Mennonites, Methodists, Oriental Orthodox, Reformed, Roman Catholic and WCC representatives. The Commission's purpose is to discuss and recommend ways to further strengthen the participation of Christian World Communions in the life and work of the WCC. The next meeting will be held in May 2008. Source: WCC Media 30/5/2007

Youth opportunities

22 September in Belfast

Youth Conference for those over 15 years: '*Banner Northern Ireland*' will be held at Stranmillis College with Stafford Carson and Stuart Olyott speaking. Cost £10. Further information and booking forms, visit www.banneroftruth.co.uk, or contact Gareth Burke 028.9045.0900 or Mark Johnston 028770 33727

21-26 October in Ballycastle

In partnership with the NI Inter-Faith Forum and the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum, Corrymeela Centre is hosting an Inter Faith Youth Conference and training programme. Twelve local spaces available for 16-25 year olds. Further details from beccamoody@corrymeela.org, ph 028.2076.2626

6-22 February 2008 - WCC Youth stewards programme in Geneva

Applications are invited from young Christians aged 18-30 to join a team of 25 international youth that will hold their own ecumenical learning programme, act as stewards for the World Council of Churches Central Committee, and design ecumenical projects to implement back home. It will involve hard work, but will offer a unique ecumenical experience of togetherness with young people from different churches, countries and cultures. Apply before September 20 supported by a recommendation from your church; download forms by 'googling' WCC Youth Stewards Programme 2008

February 2008 to January 2009 – WCC Internship programme

Five young people are invited to serve as interns in WCC's Geneva office from February 2008 to January 2009. They will be assigned to one of the WCC working areas, work under supervision and will be expected to plan an ecumenical project to implement on their return home. Apply before September 20th after downloading form website www.oikoumene.org

17 February – Universal Day of Prayer for Students since 1898

Further details from World Student Christian Federation: www.wscf.ch email regionaloffice@wscf-europe.org

Summer 2008 on Iona (Scotland)

The Iona Community is a Christian Community engaging with young people and others in areas of social justice, peace issues, worship and spirituality. Contact the Community's Youth team to find out what's happening on the island next summer: email helen@gl.a.iona.org.uk, visit www.iona.org.uk/youth

15-20 July 2008 in Sydney

World Youth Day: visit www.wyd2008.org

Pause to reflect on

Brokenness (Jean Vanier)

'Our brokenness is the wound through which the full power of God can penetrate our being and transfigure us in him... Yes, through our wounds the power of God can penetrate us and become like rivers of living water to irrigate the arid earth within us. Thus we may irrigate

the arid earth of others, so that hope and love are reborn.' (Source: Maranatha Newsletter May 2007)

Church disagreements (Archbishop Harper)

'Can we not resolve, no matter how sharp our spats and how profound our disagreements, that when we differ – as we shall, many times – we covenant with one another not to break with one another to the extent of division, except on the single issue of our relationship with and belief in Jesus Christ?' (Source: Gazette 13 July 2007, p.9)

Chocolate

'Nearly half the world's chocolate is made from cocoa grown on plantations in the Cote d'Ivoire (West Africa) where the cocoa beans are harvested by some 15,000 Malian children, many of whom are under 12 years of age, sold into indentured servitude for £50 and work 12-hour days for as little as 25p a day. These children are trafficked into forced labour, so we can eat chocolate.... What can we do to change this injustice? Choose to eat only chocolate that is guaranteed to be 'Traffic-Free', ask your local shops to stock Fair Trade and ethically sourced chocolate, promote awareness of the global campaign to ensure that all chocolate companies give a Traffic-free Guarantee on all their chocolate, promote the website www.stophetraffic.org through your churches.' (OASIS Newsround Issue 4, www.oasisuk.org).

Christian unity (Rev Dr Sam Kobia)

'Christian unity will become meaningful both to Christians and non-Christians alike if the Church takes the lead in healing and reconciling memories.... We need to recognise that we belong to each other' (Methodist Newsletter June 2007, p. 12)

Church

'Each church is the Church catholic and not simply a part of it. Each church is the Church catholic, but not the whole of it. Each church fulfils its catholicity when it is in communion with the other churches.' (*Called to be the One Church*, 9th Assembly of World Council of Churches, Porto Allegre, 2006; WCC e-news 10 July 2007)

Ecumenical friendship

The late Catholic Bishop Klaus Hemmerle suggested the following seven pointers to help evaluate the heartbeat of our own friendships with members of other churches and ecclesial communities: (i) The friendship between us should affect us (if you feel well/poor, I should feel better/worse), (ii) we would miss each other if one or other of us weren't around, (iii) sometimes it can be hard to get on but we are able to say this to each other, (iv) we keep going forward together on the journey, overcoming crises and obstacles, (v) ecumenical friendship involves becoming a gift for one another, (vi) respect both what we share in common, where we differ and value both in our relationships with one another, (vii) in our ecumenical friendship, we draw life from the same centre (source: Intercom July August 2007, Ecumenism Corner by Rev Brendan Leahy)

Forgiveness (Paul Tillich)

'Forgiveness is the highest form of forgetting because it is forgetting in spite of remembering' (Olive Branch)

Publications

'Climate Change – The Challenge to us all' by Fr Seán McDonagh, who 'attempts to develop a theological response to global warming from a combination of some traditional and contemporary moral principles.... He critiques the almost totally silent response of the Irish churches to ecological destruction in Ireland....it would be a wonderful testimony to the relevance and influence of religion if members of all the religious faiths could unite and work together to tackle global warming and protect the environment.' Intercom Sept 2007 p 11

'Forced to flee' is an information resource of stories about refugees and asylum seekers in NI written by the Refugee Action Group. This is a coalition of different NGOs and aims to be an independent voice advocating on these issues in NI. Copies available from Embrace NI office, ph. 0044(0)79699.21328

'International Directory of joint Protestant-Roman Catholic schools, colleges and Universities', Guildhall Press (2007)

The Foyle Trust for Integrated Education have recently published their first Directory of 21 schools run jointly by the Catholic and Protestant churches in Australia, Ireland, USA and UK. 'It was a case of building on the things we have in common. There are still some fundamental differences, but we have chosen to build on the things we hold together (Principal).' Order copies for £5 from 0044.28.7126.7289 or Email: info@oips.lderry.ni.sch.uk

'Mixing it up with Harry Potter' The Harry Potter phenomenon has become major part of youth culture in the last decade, yet the church seems to be coming less and less of interest. In 12 group sessions for 9-13 year olds, this resource bridges the gap and helps young people to see that a relationship with God is even more enchanting than a visit to Hogwarts. Cost £8.99, available from ph. 01235.465511, Email: christian.orders@marston.co.uk, visit www.chpublishing.co.uk

'Outside In'. A resource pack published by Corrymeela community to prepare people for the skills needed to live in a contested society. Further detail: ph 028.9050.8080 or visit www.corrymeela.org/article/outsidein.aspx

Sanctuary: a bi-monthly newsletter on asylum, refugee and migrant matters from a religious perspective. Contact Sr Joan Roddy, Refugee and Migrant Project, ph 00353.(0)1.5053157, email refproject@iecon.ie

'Shared space' Issue 4. A free research journal on peace, conflict and community relations in NI published by and available from Community Relations Council Resource Centre ph 028.9022.7555, email info@nicrc.org.uk

'Time for God's Creation' by European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN). An excellent resource for worship on an Environmental theme, it considers the proposal that a period of 'Creation Time' be introduced into the Christian calendar during the month of September - to reflect together as churches of the East and West on God the Creator and the gift of life ISBN 2-88070-116-3

'Together': The Autumn/Winter edition of ecumenical news from Scotland includes an article on *'The importance of Ecumenism'* by Revd Mary Buchanan who convenes Scottish Churches Forum. It can be downloaded from www.acts-scotland.org/downloads/TogetherAutumnWinter07.pdf

DIARY 2007 (dates not mentioned elsewhere)

4 September – 20 November in Dublin

A 12 week course on *'The Art of Stillness'* will be held at All Hallows College from 7.30-9.30pm to encourage amore contemplative lifestyle with teachings from St John of the Cross, Thomas Merton and Anthony de Mello. Cost €250. Details: Helen ph (01)837.3745 or email: hlawless@allhallows.ie

8 September in Roscrea

Oak House Ecumenical Fellowship are organising a day's focus on *'Bridges to Contemplation – thoughts of Thomas Merton'* at Mount St Joseph Abbey, Roscrea, Co Offaly. Further details: Claire Besnyoe, ph 00353. (0)918.43004

9 September: 'Hard Gospel Sunday'

Specially produce resource packs are being distributed to all Church of Ireland parishes to focus on *'Loving our neighbours as Ourselves- dealing positively with difference'*. Further details: www.hardgospel.net

10-13 September in Belfast

Under God's Gaze: reconciling spaces, healing places'. An open event organised by the Centre for Contemporary Christianity in Ireland (CCCCI) in partnership with the Centre for Global Urban Leadership in Seattle as an international consultation on reconciliation at Farset International. Further information: www.contemporarychristianity.org/events

11 September in Belfast

Dedication of The Spire of Hope in St Anne's Cathedral at 8pm. The Bishop of New York will preach on this 6th anniversary of 9/11. Details: www.belfastcathedral.org

13 September – 18 October in Dungannon

Six Thursday mornings from 10.30-12.30 at Leisure Centre, Circular Road Dungannon on women's contribution to *'Just Peacemaking'*. Further details from Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin, 683 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 4EG, ph +44(0)2890775010, email: cenisec@tcd.ie

14 September in L/Derry

Ulster University are hosting a symposium *'Giving voice to new voices: Africans in NI'* at the Aberfoyle House Magee campus at 9.30am. Further details: Elly Odhiambo ph.028.7137.5195, Email: e.odhiambo@ulster.ac.uk

15 September in Dublin

Peter Rollins will be speaking at the annual meeting of Open Christianity Network at 2pm in Minor Hall, Taney Parish Centre, Dundrum (200 m. up Taney Rd from Dundrum Luas stop). Peter is the founder of the Ikon community in Belfast and author of *'How (Not) to Speak of God'*, (SPCK, 2006). 'OCN is for those on an exploration of belief and spirituality'. Further details: info@ocnireland.com

16 September in Belfast and Dublin

Christian Aid City walks in Belfast contact 028.9038.1204, email Belfast@christian-aid.org; in Dublin contact 01.611.0801, email Dublin@christian-aid.org

17 September - 26 November in Armagh

Six alternate Monday evenings from 7.30-9.30pm in the St Patrick's Trian, 40 English St on *'Just Peacemaking'*. Further details: ISE (see above)

18 September – 23 October in Ballybay, Co Monaghan

Six Tuesday evenings from 8-10pm at Cuan Mhuire on *'Restorative Justice - a healing process?'* Further details ISE (see above)

19 September – 28 November in Belfast

Six alternate Wednesday mornings from 10.30-12.30 at 683 Antrim Rd on *'Just Peacemaking'*. Further details ISE (see above)

19 September – 24 October in Newry

Six Wednesday evenings from 7.30-9.30pm at St Catherine's Hall, Dominic St. on *'Christ in a World of Many Faiths'*. Further details ISE (see above)

21 September: 'International Day of Prayer for Peace'

The World Council of Churches and the United Nations invite churches and communities 'to pray and act together to nurture lasting for peace in the hearts of people, their families, communities and societies'. Prayer and liturgical resources are available on the European theme of the Decade to overcome Violence *'Make me an instrument of your peace.'* (source WCC Media weekly 10-16 August 2007) Register your commitment to join a UN International Peace Vigil on www.idpvigil.com

24 September – 3 December in Belfast

Ten Monday evenings from 7.30-9.30pm at ISE, 683 Antrim Rd on *'Christ in a World of Many Faiths'*. No charge. Further details Rev Dr Johnston McMaster at ISE (see above)

24 September – 3 December in Monaghan

Six alternate Monday evenings from 8-10pm in the Four Seasons Hotel on 'Just Peacemaking.' Further details ISE (see above)

25 September – 11 December in Belfast

12 Tuesday evenings from 6-7.30pm at Edgehill Theological College (9 Lennoxvale) on 'Western Christian Spirituality – exploring theology together' as a joint programme with Mater Dei (Dublin). Cost £50. Further details: ph 028.9066.5870

26 September

Methodist Church in Ireland and their Covenant partners, Church of Ireland, will be celebrating their shared Wesleyan heritage

26 September in Belfast

Professor Steven Williams will be speaking on 'The Theology of Peace-building' from 10-1pm at Knock Presbyterian Church. Further details: Laura Coulter, ph 028.9032.2284

28 September in Belfast

As part of their campaign for a strong and inclusive Bill of Rights (NI), Human Rights Consortium are hosting a Conference 'Getting the Bill right' from 9.30-4.30pm at the Wellington Park Hotel. Further details: ph 028.9096.1128, email info@billofrightsni.org

30 September in Cork

Christian Aid City walk: contact ph. 023.41468, email cork@christian-aid.org

1 October - 5 November in Tandragee

Six Monday evenings from 8-10pm in the Recreation Centre on 'Restorative Justice – a healing process?' Further details ISE (see above)

2 October: 'UN International Day of Non-Violence'

3 October in L/Derry

INCORE's annual Diversity Conference theme on 'Race and the Media' will focus on the freedom of the media versus biased reporting of minority ethnic communities. Speakers include Mike Jempson (MediaWise Trust). 9.45-3pm. Further information and venue details from Roisin O'Hagan ph 028.71.375523 or email: r.ohagan@ulster.ac.uk.

3 October – 14 November in Dundalk

Six Wednesday evenings from 8-10pm in the Fairways Hotel on 'Christ in a World of Many Faiths'. Further details from ISE (see above)

6 October in Dublin

A second Eco-Workshop is being organised by the Church of Ireland. Further details from Rev David Humphries ph 028.9048.2292 or w Humphries@hotmail.com

6-10 October in Ballymena

An international conference of the Moravian Heritage Network will be held at Gracehill. Details from

www.gracehillvillage.org or email David Johnston at johnstonni@aol.com

12 October in Belfast

Bible Society is celebrating 200 years of service in NI at 7.45pm at St Anne's Cathedral in a service of word, music and drama. The Handwritten Bible will be exhibited for the first time. Tickets available at no cost from Bible Society ph.028.9032.6577

18 October in Ballycastle

Rev Dr Donald Shriver Jr. (President Emeritus, Union Theological Seminary, New York and author of two books on political forgiveness and repentance) will be holding a seminar from 10am – 1pm at the Corrymeela Centre on 'Forgiveness as Community Building in the New Testament'. Register with Becca Moody, ph. 028.2076.2626, email beccamoody@corrymeela.org,

18 October in Belfast

Catherwood Lecture in Public Theology will be given by Rev Dr Donald Shriver Jr (see above) on: *Christian Faith and Civic Courage* at 8pm at Malone House, Barnett Demesne. Further details from Claire Martin (CCCI) 028.9032.5258

21 October in Kilkenny

Christian Aid City walk: contact ph.01.611.0801, email pbyrne@christian-aid.org

23 - 26 October in Yorkshire

'Standing on holy ground- sharing sacred space' at Scargill House. Drawing on insights from major faith traditions, the course will focus on issues of ecological concern, asking what people of faith can contribute to the deepening ecological crisis. Further info from Dilly Baker, warden@scargillhouse.co.uk or ph 01756.760234

30 October - 4 December in Omagh

Six Tuesday evenings from 8-10pm at Tara Counselling and Personal Development Centre on 'Just Peacemaking.' Further details ISE (see above)

1 November – 6 December in Enniskillen

Six Thursday evenings from 8-10pm in the Enniskillen Library on 'Christ in a World of Many Faiths.' Further details from ISE (see above)

1 - 2 November in Belfast

ISE and NI Human Rights Commission are co-hosting a conference on the theme 'Rights and Righteousness: religious pluralism and human rights' to stimulate new discussions about the relationship between faith and rights. Further details from www.nihrc.org or www.tcd.ie/ise/news or ph. Louise Furber at +44(0)28.9024.3987

3 November in Belfast

CCCI's Annual Day Conference (10-4pm) with Nigel Biggar (Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology at Oxford University) speaking on 'Divided Past – Shared Future: churches addressing the legacy

of the Troubles' at the Belfast Bible College. Additional seminars with Rev John Dunlop, Sr Geraldine Smyth and Kate Turner. Cost £30. Further details: Claire Martin 028.9032.5258, email: claire.martin@contemporarychristianity.org

6 - 7 November in Brecon (Wales)

'Women walking together' - workshops with Prof Ursula King at Llangasty Ecumenical Centre, nr Llangorse to discuss women's world wide involvement in interfaith issues and peace. Further detail ph 01600.716202.

8 and 15 November in Belfast

A two-day course run by Mediation NI on 'Handling Life's Conflicts' and learning skills to deal with difficult decisions more effectively. Further details ph.028.9043.8614, Email: info@mediationnorthernireland.org

10 November in Belfast

A peacemaking conference will be held by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Further details from Laura Coulter, ph 028.9032.2284

12-13 November in Edinburgh

Future Church Conference 2007 being held at Macdonald Houston House Hotel and hosted by Mission Accompaniment Scotland Network on 'Mission accompaniment in emerging church and in traditional church in a changing context' with Martyn Atkins speaking (Principal of Cliff College). £120/€180 to register with Global Mission Network, ph. +44.(0)20.7654.7232 or Email: tessa.stawski@ctbi.org.uk

14 November in Dublin

Prof Elizabeth Dreyer (Fairfield University, USA) will be speaking at 7.30pm on 'The Theology of the Cross' at Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy. Further details: Jennifer Linnane, ph 01.269.8388

25 - 29 November in Rathcoole

A local exhibition highlighting success stories in the local community, called 'Our kind of people', will be held in St Comgall CofI parish/Rathcoole Youth centre in partnership with Hard Gospel project. Further details from Stephen Dallas at 078349.92895, or email stephendallas@hardgospel.net or visit www.hardgospel.net

27 November in London

Christian Aid AGM with its Sponsoring churches will be held at Lambeth Palace

1 December in Dublin

'Come rest awhile' is a one-day Advent retreat for quiet prayer and reflection at All Hallows College for €75, contact (01)852.0742, email pathways@allhallows.ie

DIARY 2008

18-19 January in Dublin

Hard Gospel Project are organising a Conference on Immigration at the Emmaus Centre, Swords. Visit website for details: www.hardgospel.net

21 January in Drogheda

The next annual Greenhills conference will be held at Our Lady's College, Greenhills. Details: Fr Myles Rearden CM, ph (01)708.3649 or email: john.m.rearden@may.ie

13-20 February in Geneva

Rev Dr Heather Morris (Methodist Church of Ireland) will be representing the CTBI member churches at the next Central Committee of World Council of Churches

2nd April in Bray

The next AGM of the Irish Council of Churches will be held in the Methodist church

8-10 April in Herts

Training course for recently appointed Ecumenical Officers will be held at High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddeson is being organised by Churches Together in England and CYTUN (Churches Together in Wales). Cost £130. Further details from jenny.bond@cte.org.uk or ph 0161.249.251.5

12 April in Sheffield

The American theologian, Marcus Borg, will be speaking on 'Jesus – uncovering the life, teachings and relevance of a religious revolutionary' at the 2008 Conference of the St Marks Centre for Radical Christianity. Details from Adrian Alker, email adrian@stmarkssheffield.co.uk

18-21 June in Belfast

International conference run by Centre for Contemporary Christianity in Ireland

Articles for next edition

The next edition of *Irish Ecumenical News* will be published in the Spring 2008. Contributions that would interest local faith communities and the wider ecumenical movement on this island, and are no more than 150 words, are invited to be sent to the Inter-Church Centre **before March 20th**. (Please include local contact details.) Help to contribute ecumenical information that's useful and relevant to others on this island and which advances the Gospel mandate to be one.

Extend the links

When you have finished reading this newsletter, do pass it on to others to share in your community so we can strengthen our networking as an ecumenical movement. New readers are invited to send us their email address so we can include them in future mailings. Any comments about this edition, what's useful or otherwise, are welcomed.

Michael Earle, Editor

General Secretary, Irish Council of Churches
Executive Secretary, Irish Inter-Church Meeting
September 2007

(See front page for full contact details for the Inter-Church Centre office)