



Summer 2008 No. 50

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”

Welcome to the 50th edition of this modest newsletter. It stated as an outcome of the Glenstal Conference of 1981 and the first edition appeared 26 years ago in the Spring of 1982. Its first Editor was Bishop Donald Kennedy assisted by an Advisory Board made up of Revd Robin Boyd (ISE), Revd Gerry Clifford (RC Ecumenical Advisor, Armagh), Jerome Connolly (Irish Commission for Justice and Peace), Revd John Knox (ICC), Revd John Morrow (Corrymeela) and Sister Carmel Niland (Sisters of Zion). Its original aim was ‘to present news of past and future events, book reviews (‘it might be worth reading...’) and selected documentation’. Thanks to those contributors who, through this newsletter, have helped to keep the flame alive for subsequent generations of Irish ecumenists to treasure. The full archive is held in the Inter-Church office in Belfast.



The Power of the Word

by Rev Brendan Leahy,
Secretary to the Irish
Bishops' Advisory
Committee on
Ecumenism, longstanding
member of the Irish Inter-
Church Committee and
Professor of Systematic
Theology, St Patrick's
College, Maynooth.

We all live by “words” that guide our daily actions and reactions. These words can be emotions of the heart or ideas of our mind. History and traditions shape these words. Often we simply pick up ideas around us like breathing in the surrounding air -- and the air as we know is not always as clear as we think!

Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, is the Word of God. He came to bring words of salvation. The one Word found in every word of the Gospel is

Love, containing a new way of thinking, and a new logic of fellowship, a new spur towards forgiveness and a new code of mutuality.

When we manage to silence ourselves to let the saving Word become life in us, the Gospel weaves a wonderful pattern that shapes us deeply in the image of the One and Triune God, in whose image we have been created. Every interpersonal encounter becomes a place of salvation. Martin Luther commented that when the word of God flourishes, then the whole Church flourishes. We could add that when the word flourishes then the human family flourishes. And that's the “David” contribution members of churches can contribute to the “Goliath” of difficulties that sometimes surround us.

In the coming months members of the Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church are celebrating the Word in various ways. In October a Synod of Bishops will take place in Rome dedicated to the theme of the Word of God in the life and mission of the Church. Both the Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church have begun a “Pauline” year (marking the 2,000th anniversary of the apostle's birth) that seeks to be a time also of renewed ecumenical commitment.

In a moving scene described in Acts, Paul addresses the elders of the Church of Ephesus saying: “And now I commend you to God and to the word...that has power to build you up...” (Acts 20:32). Paul didn't say “I am leaving you with the Word” but rather “I commend you to the Word”. It's Paul's inheritance. The Word has power to give a new mentality, to free us and to build community. There's always a need to discover new ways to live the Word together. And new ways to share how it has impacted on us and built up the community. Christians can admire other valid initiatives and projects to build community but they believe it is above all the Word lived and shared together that has the power to guide, reconcile and transform.

Updated website on Irish ecumenism

This edition of *Irish Ecumenical News*, along with an up to date calendar of ecumenical events and countless resources for use by local parishes, faith communities and ecumenical groups, can be downloaded from our new website at www.irishchurches.org The quality can only be as good and useful as the information that you, as readers, send to this office about dates/stories of ecumenical events taking place in your area and resources you have found helpful in your groups. Let's develop this as a network of ideas and actions to stimulate and encourage each other at the local level with the purpose of strengthening the witness of the Body of Christ on this island.

Farewell and Welcome

Members of the Irish Council of Churches and Irish Inter-Church Meeting recently thanked **Karen Kelly** for the huge contribution she made over the past three years as Office Administrator. She ran the office efficiently, helped make sure all the gatherings ran smoothly, upgraded all our systems, and always went the extra mile with whomever she had contact. She leaves to follow a calling to plant a Vineyard Church in Galway with her husband Shane. *Slán agus beannacht.*

We now welcome **Jennifer Fernandez** from Belfast as the newly appointed Administrator. She comes with extensive experience in financial accounting, administration, event organisation, hospitality, customer service and has many other interests which we will try and make use of in this multifaceted role. She can be contacted on the same email address: info@irishchurches.org *Cead mile failte.*

Note:

Every effort has been made to check the accuracy of information provided in this edition of IEN, but readers are still encouraged to double check the primary sources for dates, venues and websites.

Ecumenical Congratulations to:

- **Rev John Alderdice** as newly appointed Methodist chaplain at Queen's University, Belfast.
- **Cornerstone Community** as they celebrate their 25th anniversary as an ecumenical presence at 445 Springfield Rd, West Belfast. Dessie Kelly has recently been appointed as their new Reconciliation Project Officer: ph.028.9032.1649, email cornerstone@cornerstonecom.fsnet.co.uk, www.cornerstonecommunity.co.uk
- **Bishop Tony Farquhar** who celebrated the 25th anniversary of his Episcopal ordination in the Diocese of Down and Connor. He serves as Chairman of both the Commission and Advisory Committee on Ecumenism of the Irish Bishops' Conference, as Co-Chairman of the Roman Catholic Church's Dialogue with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, as

a member of the International Anglican Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, and as a longstanding member of the Irish Inter-Church Committee. *Intercom* June 2008.

- **Rev Aian Ferguson** - installed as President of the Methodist Church in Ireland
- **Major David Jackson** (Salvation Army) – appointed to Irish Inter-Church Committee for the next two years
- **Elizabeth Kelly** (Methodist) - elected as Chairperson of the Dublin Council of Churches
- **Rev Donald Ker** (General Secretary, Methodist Church in Ireland) - elected as President-Designate of the Methodist Church in 2009
- **Rev David Kerr** (Methodist) - awarded an MBE in the Queens Birthday Honours list for services to the community in Northern Ireland
- **Rt Rev Robert McKee** - appointed as Moderator of the Non Subscribing Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- **Rev Dr Donald Patton** - installed as Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- **David Porter** recently appointed as Director of the International Centre for Reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral with responsibility for the Community Cross of Nails, a network of around 180 reconciliation groups in 28 countries around the world
- **Bishop Noël Treanor** - ordained as Bishop of the Catholic diocese of Down and Connor
- **Bishop Trevor Williams** - consecrated as Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe (Church of Ireland)
- **Rt Rev Bishop John (Youhanna) Yazigi** soon to be appointed as the new Metropolitan of the Antiochian Orthodox Church in the Diocese of Central and Western Europe - which includes the congregations in Ireland.

News and stories from Irish ecumenical groups

Ecumenical advocacy on Cluster Bombs Treaty Conference, Dublin

The Executive of the Irish Council of Churches wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Republic of Ireland) and the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (UK) adding the weight of their member churches to the international campaign for a complete ban on these weapons. At the Dublin Conference in May, more than 100 nations agreed to back an international ban on these controversial weapons – however, China, Russia and the USA were amongst those nations producing and stockpiling these weapons who opposed the ban.

Ecumenical advocacy on UN International Day of Non-Violence (October 2)

The Inter-Church Committee on Social Issues has written to the Director General of RTÉ inviting the national television and radio broadcasting station to lend their support to this UN day and not broadcast programmes with any 'violent death for entertainment' on October 2nd. The latter suggested the inclusion of

programming themes of non-violence and non-violent conflict resolution, at home or abroad, as this date is the anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi. No reply has been received to date.

Churches Peace Education Programme

Over the past three years, the trustees appointed by ICC and ICJSA (Irish Commission for Justice and Social Affairs) commissioned a research report to find a new direction for this programme and then submitted major applications for funding a new initiative. None have been successful so the decision has reluctantly been taken to wind up the organisation. Its remaining educational resources have been distributed to the Education and Library Boards, Corrymeela, Stranmillis and St Mary's University Colleges. Elaine Hall wrote a history of the programme celebrating its many achievements and innovative resources produced during the period between 1978-2005 – a few copies are still available from the Inter-Church Centre.

Dublin Council of Churches AGM (June 11)

In presenting his annual report to the Patrons and nine Member Churches of DCC, Fr Godfrey O'Donnell (Romanian Orthodox and outgoing Chairperson) drew attention to the Council's achievements this year in welcoming the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin into full membership at the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service in St Mary's Pro-Cathedral; organising with DDACE the ecumenical Advent Walk of Light in the greater Leeson Street area of Dublin; hosting the annual lecture by Bishop Huber (EKD); helping to organise the National Day of Commemoration (8/7/07); deepening the Council's ecumenical understanding and making links with non-member churches. Appreciation was expressed to Fr Godfrey and Elizabeth Kelly was warmly welcomed as the incoming Chairperson for the next period. Further detail: www.dublinchurches.ie

Dunmurry Churches Together

Dunmurry Churches Together is a group of four (previously five) local churches in south Belfast which worship and pray together, and seek to understand each other's traditions better. The churches are: St Anne's Roman Catholic, St Colman's Church of Ireland, First Presbyterian (Non-subscribing), and Dunmurry Presbyterian. Arising out of the clergy meeting together, the congregations first cooperated in an open air Carol Service organised by PACE, then began to hold a series of Bible Studies during Lent, and cooperated in a young people's Holiday Club called "Bodybuilders". The year of the millennium gave them the impetus to do more together, and these are some of the things they've done since:

- A musical event to celebrate the millennium involving all the choirs and local musical talent;
- Regular times of worship together on the first Sunday in Advent, Good Friday- a Walk with the Cross, and Easter Sunday- a dawn service and breakfast;
- Visits to each other's churches to understand how the layout and furnishings contribute to our worship
- Visits to each other's churches to hear and appreciate how we celebrate the sacrament of Communion/Eucharist.

- A musical and visual presentation called "Celebrating Life" on issues of justice, in association with Trocaire and Christian Aid.
- Joint services in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and morning and evening prayer sessions during that week
- Doing the *Creating Community* course developed by Corrymeela
- Further Lent study courses

They are interested to have contact with other similar church groups, to learn from each other's experiences. Further details: john.braithwaite4@ntlworld.com

ICC AGM 2008

84 Council delegates and invited guests from the 15 member churches attended this year's AGM which was held on April 2nd in the Methodist Church in Bray, Co. Wicklow. David Quinn (Iona Institute) addressed the day's theme '**Witnessing together in a changing Ireland**' with a response given by Bishop Richard Clarke (Meath and Kildare) – copies of both speeches can be found on the website www.irishchurches.org Afternoon workshops applied the theme of 'witnessing together' to *family life, suicide and what it means to be church today*. In the formal business session, the Annual report (refer to website above) and accounts were approved; appreciation was given to the Rev Dr Sam Hutchinson for his tireless contribution over the previous year in representing ICC at the Bill of Rights Forum (NI); approval was given to sell the office premises at 48 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast and purchase a replacement property; Gillian Kingston was thanked for the enormous contribution she had made as ICC President over the previous two years; Rev Tony Davidson was installed as President for the next two years and Bishop Richard Clarke was elected as ICC Vice-President. It was agreed to hold ICC's next AGM on Thursday, 2nd April 2009 at the Moravian Church in Gracehill village, Ballymena.

ICC's Board of Overseas Affairs

Middle East focus: The Board has had a strong focus on the Middle East this year with several lunchtime meetings held in the Inter-Church Centre in Belfast on different aspects of the situation. In January, Ryan Moore from Ballymoney spoke about being an 'ecumenical accompanier' with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). In May, George Rishmawi and Eyad Burnat (respectively a Palestinian Christian and a Palestinian Muslim) spoke about the situation from a Palestinian point of view. Also in May, Archbishop Alan Harper and Methodist President Rev Roy Cooper reported back to an invited audience on their visit as part of a delegation of the leaders of the four largest churches in Ireland to the region.

Irish Aid: On 12th May, the Board hosted a well attended meeting in Belfast for member churches, mission agencies and NGOs to interact with staff from Irish Aid and hear how they might work as partners in funding appropriate development projects overseas. These annual meetings have become a regular part of the Board's work each year. Further detail: www.irishaid.gov.ie

ICC representation at annual conferences 2008

Thanks to the following members of ICC Executive who have represented ICC this year at the Church of Ireland General Synod (Rev Colin Campbell, Non-Presbyterian Church in Ireland); Methodist Church Annual Conference (Revd Raymond Fox, Church of Ireland); Presbyterian General Assembly (Derick Woods, Moravian); Friends Yearly Meeting (Rev Lorraine Kennedy-Ritchie, Presbyterian).

IICC reception for German Lutheran delegation

On May 19th, Bishop Donal McKeown and Rev Donald Ker co-hosted an ecumenical reception with dinner in the Moravian Church in Belfast for Bishop Wolfgang Huber and a senior delegation from the German Lutheran church. The group were paying their first visit to Armagh, Belfast and the Lutheran congregation in Dublin, where Bishop Huber as Chairman of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) preached and gave two public lectures entitled '*Remembering the past in reconciliation*' and '*Theological reasons for Human Rights and the consequences for the ecumenical process.*' As part of the reception in Belfast, the delegation appreciated listening to local stories of reconciliation by those attending and the closing act of worship. Thanks to Rev Paul Holdsworth and members of University Road congregation for their ecumenical hospitality and delicious meal. Copies of lectures: www.ekd.de/english/58558.html

IICC meeting

Cardinal Sean Brady presided at the last meeting of the Irish Inter-Church Committee on April 17 in Dundalk. Smaller member churches of ICC were invited to join in a discussion with Dick Roche TD (Minister of State for European Affairs) about the forthcoming EU Lisbon Treaty referendum. The meeting gave further consideration to the final message from the 3rd European Ecumenical Assembly 2007; to Bishop Huber's visit; and to future planning. The next meeting will be held on September 18th.

Place of Prayer

For three weeks in May in a Methodist owned building in central Belfast, a 24/7 prayer house welcomed anyone on the streets to a quiet place to pray. The house was hosted for 24 hour periods by 18 Christian organisations, including the Catholic Church, Methodist church, the Church of Ireland Youth Department, Youth for Christ and Youth with a Mission. Gillian Best, the Methodist Church youth coordinator, said it had been 'hard work and extremely busy, but it has grabbed people's imagination and ...if we got an opportunity like this again, we would do it.' *Newsletter 31 May 2008 and Methodist Newsletter June 2008*

Pulpit space

Readers may have caught up with the recent ecumenical news that Bishop Harold Miller and Canon Gregory Dunstan (Church of Ireland) as well as Rev Donald Ker (Methodist) were amongst those invited to preach at this year's Novena in Clonard Monastery (Belfast) in June, while Dom Mark-Ephrem Nolan, OSB (Superior of the Benedictine Community, Rostrevor, Co Down) made history when he was invited to preach at Bishop Trevor William's

consecration in Christ Church Cathedral (Dublin) in July.

Young Christian Workers movement

YCW is an international youth movement which values the dignity and worth of each young person. It enables its members to challenge social exclusion and take action to bring about change in their home, workplace and social life. Further details: YCW national Office, 11 Talbot St, Dublin 1, ph 01.878.0291, email info@ycw.ie or visit www.ycw.ie

Church family news

African Community Mass

First celebrated in September 1999 by the Vincentian Fathers in St Peter's Church Phibsboro (Dublin), it continues to meet the spiritual needs of the large numbers of African Catholic Christian immigrants living in Ireland and is now celebrated each month in Blanchardstown, Lucan, Clondalkin and Swords. Fr Daniel Okechukwu writes that a major challenge 'is how to integrate people who are already used to a particular culture and mode of worship into the mainstream parish life ...without losing their rich personal identity, culture and heritage.' *Intercom*, April 2008

Church news

- Church of Ireland *Gazette*: an independent weekly, established in 1856, circulation 4,000
- *Presbyterian Herald*: official monthly, established in 1943, circulation 16,000
- *ABC Insight*: bi-monthly magazine of Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland, est. 2008, circulation 1,700
- *Irish Catholic*: an independent weekly, established in 1888, circulation 27,000
- *Methodist Newsletter*: independent monthly, established 1972, circulation 4,000

Source: Methodist Newsletter March 2008

Centre for Ecology and Spirituality, Co Wicklow

The Dominican sisters established this Dominican Farm and Ecology Centre in 1998. Called *An Tairseach* (the Irish word for the threshold), it offers a centre for Ecology and Spirituality, an organic farm and farm shop, and a conservation area suitable for field studies. Further details: 00353.404.61833, ecenw@eircom.net, www.ecocentrewicklow.ie

Dublin Inter-Faith Forum

The Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Diarmuid Martin, has said Dublin needs an Inter Faith Forum to deepen bonds between different faiths in our society. Speaking at the launch of Fr Michael Hurley's latest book on the Irish School of Ecumenics 1970-2007, he said such a Forum could 'act as an agile platform in which the different faiths could come together to deepen the bonds of friendship, to address common issues and witness in a more secular environment to the reality of belief.' *Intercom*, June 2008

Justice parish

Justice is not an optional extra so two years ago, the Greystones parish decided to place justice at the heart

of their parish life. Naming itself a justice parish, it sought to live this and be faithful to Luke 3.11 ('*anyone with two coats must share with their brother and sister who has none*'). It decided to give away half of its money. The 'Two Coats Initiative' seeks to achieve this in a planned, effective and sustainable way. A major fundraising drive was put in place. In the first year, 26% of parish revenue was set aside to be distributed to ten different parishes and projects both in Ireland and in many countries in the developing world. The aim is that in three years it will reach 50% of parish revenue. *Intercom*, April 2008

Latvian Lutheran chaplaincy in Ireland

The Latvian Evangelical Lutheran congregation in Ireland was founded in October 2007 and Rev Ugis Bruklene has been appointed as full time pastor-missionary for an initial period of a year. It has around 40 members and is continually growing. It offers full pastoral help, guidance and services (confessions, confirmation classes, Bible study, Sunday school, baptism, funerals). Weekly Sunday services are held at 2pm at 24 Adelaide Road, Dublin 2; monthly services held in Northern Ireland, Buncrana and Limerick. Contacts with any Latvians around the island are welcomed. Further detail: Rev Ugis Bruklene, 27 Druid Glen, White Linen Woods, Longford; ugis.bruklene@lutheran.lv
Skype:bruklene2000 ; <http://www.lalb.lv> ; mobile: 00353 (0)87 63 99490; 00353 (0)86 37 43 796

Mass attendance for Republic of Ireland

The European Social Survey recently reported weekly (or more often) Mass attendance at 56.4% of Catholics in Ireland in 2006/7, slightly down from 2005 (63.4%) *Intercom*, July/August 2008, p.18

Orthodox

New ground was being broken on April 14th when Bishop Marc from the Romanian Orthodox Church celebrated a Vespers service at the Antiochian Orthodox church in North Belfast. It is believed to have been the first service taken by an Orthodox Bishop visiting Northern Ireland.

Year of Vocation

The Catholic Church in Ireland is currently in a Year of Vocation which runs from 13 April 2008 to Vocation Sunday on 3 May 2009. 'The aim is to raise awareness of the common vocation we all share through baptism as expressed through witness, love and service. Within each of these themes, the specific vocations of marriage, the religious life, the single life and priesthood will be highlighted and promoted. *Intercom* June 2008

News and stories beyond this island

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

At its AGM in May, the following organisations were accepted as CTBI's Bodies in Association: *Living Stones* (1986) brings pilgrims and Middle Eastern Christians together in worship and understanding (www.livingstonesonline.org.uk); *The Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (1967) aims to show that in the Blessed Virgin Mary, Christians of many traditions may find a focus in their search for

unity (www.esbvm.org.uk); *Operation Noah* (2003) is an inclusive group of Christians who were the first and remain the only Christian campaign to focus exclusively on climate change (www.operationnoah.org)

Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe

CCME is an ecumenical organisation founded in 1964 that serves the churches in their commitment to strangers, responding to the message of the Bible which insists on the dignity of every human being, in order to promote an inclusive policy at European and national levels for migrants, refugees and minority groups. Its mandate includes monitoring European and national migration, serving churches in their advocacy and addressing fears in societies around migration. Further information: www.ccme.be

Christian-Hindu relationships in the UK

Nine member churches of CTBI recently issued a press statement (July 3) calling for a renewed Hindu-Christian Forum representative of their communities in the wake of a recent report from the Hindu Forum of Britain entitled '*Caste in the UK*'. The statement noted some of the difficult issues highlighted in the report and urged 'engagement in worthwhile conversations involving all concerned, avoidance of all public or private language that might unnecessarily cause offence, and opposition to all forms of discrimination.' www.ctbi.org.uk

Churches Legislation Advisory Service

Formerly known as the Churches Main Committee, this reconstituted body has Christian and Jewish representation and communicates with the Westminster government on proposals for legislation etc. It advises its members on issues relating to property, finance, tax, employment and charitable status. Further details: Frank Cranmer, Secretary, ph 0044 (0)207.222.1265, email cmc@c-of-e.org.uk or visit www.cmainc.org.uk

Conference of European Churches

Robert Cochran (Methodist and convenor of IICC's committee on social issues) represented ICC at CEC's Church and Society Commission meeting in April in Prague. Much of the Commission's work focuses on religion in the market place, inter-faith relations, Lisbon Treaty and social policy issues in Europe. CEC will be celebrating its 50th anniversary next year when its next General Assembly will be held in Lyon (France) from 15-21 July, 2009.

Consultative Group on Ministry among Children

This CTBI network meets twice a year and 'produces material pivotal to children's work and challenging churches in their attitudes to children.' Its training manual, *Core Skills*, equips those involved with leading children's groups in churches. Further information: www.cgmcontheweb.com

Interfaith game show in Britain

An interfaith television game show, believed to be the first in Britain, in which Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh contestants compete against one another for cash prizes is being broadcast weekly from the London studios of the Islam Channel since mid-

June. Called *Faith Off*, it is intended to attract younger people, promote good relations and bring a new approach to the interfaith debate other than that of the 'usual consultative round table format.' ENI 18 June 2008

Internships WCC

The World Council of Churches is inviting applications from young people aged 18-30 to serve as interns in its Geneva offices from February 2009-January 2010. The five selected interns will be assigned to one of the WCC's working areas and will work with programme staff under individual supervision. During their stay in Geneva each intern is expected to plan an ecumenical project to implement in his/her home context when they return in 2010. Applications can be downloaded from www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/wcc-interns Closing date: September 15

Pentecost Ecumenical Forum

This Forum has recently been established by members of Orthodox, Protestant and Anglican churches of the Federation of Evangelical Entities in Spain and various organisations of the Catholic Church. It was inspired by last year's Global Christian Forum in Kenya and aims to strengthen the spirit of unity and promote what unites them. www.globalchristianforum.org GCF News 7 June 2008

'Who is my neighbour? – the churches' response to social order linked to gangs, drugs, guns and knives.'

Churches Together in England launched this timely report in the House of Commons on July 21. It has been prepared by Bishop Joe Aldred (CTE's Secretary for Minority Ethnic Affairs) and Drs Keith and Sophie Hebden (Queen's Foundation, Birmingham) and can be downloaded at www.churches-together.net

Written resources to inspire and encourage

'35 stories to make you think' by Heather Butler, publ BRF. This is a collection of sensitive stories written for children in years 3-6 on topical issues like family life, life and death, community life and personal life – each offers discussion questions, Bible links, ideas for thinking activities and a short prayer. Moravian Messenger July 2008 p.77

'Above Us and Between Us – an introduction and resource on the letter 'A Common Word between Us and You', a letter signed by 158 Muslim scholars' by Peter Colwell, Executive Secretary for Church Life and Inter Faith Network, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland 2008. This can be freely downloaded on www.ctbi.org.uk

'Biographical Dictionary of Irish Quakers' by Richard Harrison, Four Courts Press, Dublin 2008. An updated edition of Irish Quakers as 'a living part of the history of the island of Ireland with numerous connections with the wider communities amongst which we live and of which we are a part.' Friendly Word May-June 2008

'The Breaking of Bread: Biblical reflections on the Eucharist' by Cardinal Cahal Daly, Veritas, 2008. €12.95 Written by one of Ireland's most distinguished theologians, this is described as a book for meditation and prayer to deepen Eucharistic faith and nourish Eucharistic devotion. 'Humbly, this books aims to be a work of biblical theology on its knees.'

'Christianity, Climate Change and Sustainable Living' by Nick Spencer and Robert White, SPCK, 2007

The authors draw their vision from Isaiah chapters 40-66 that 'we should live, not for ourselves or for today, but in accordance with the right order of things, obeying God's law, within the Kingdom of God.' Essentially they support the idea of a whole Bible Gospel taking seriously the accounts of the creation and fall and weave this into a dream of what sustainable living would look like. Lion and Lamb Spring 2008

'Death and Taxes – the true toll of tax dodging', Christian Aid, May 2008, www.christianaid.org.uk

This hard hitting report from Christian Aid calculates that US\$160 billion a year is being 'leached from the developing world by the... world's transnational corporations ... engaged in aggressive tax avoidance schemes and tax evasion (e.g. transfer mispricing and falsifying invoices). This is several times larger than the US\$40-60 billion the World Bank estimates poor countries will need annually to meet all the UN Millennium Development Goals, which aim to halve poverty by 2015.' The report recommends a number of actions (both unilateral and multilateral) that need to be urgently taken by both British and Irish governments to address and change this. 'We predict that illegal trade-related tax evasion alone will be responsible for some 5.6 million deaths of young children in the developing world between 2000 and 2015. That is almost 1,000 a day. Half are already dead.'

'The Ecumenical Review'- a quarterly publication from World Council of Churches is available for reading at the Inter-Church Centre in Belfast (but not to be taken away)

'Faith in a plural society- values, attitudes and practices of churches in protecting minority participation', by Fran Porter, publ Centre for Contemporary Christianity in Ireland, 2008. An exploration into the ways in which Catholic and Protestant churches are responding to Northern Ireland's increasing social diversity, especially in relation to ethnicity, religion and sexual identity. Further detail: www.contemporarychristianity.org

'Families First' – the new name of the Christian magazine formerly known as *Home and Family*. It aims to promote good parenting, encouraging loving and lasting marriages and support people in an active Christian faith. Further detail: www.familiesfirstmagazine.com Presbyterian Herald July August 2008

'From the Bottom of the Pond- the forgotten art of experiencing God in the depths of the present moment' by Simon Small, O Books, £7.99. 'Small in size, deeply

yet unconventionally Christian, as wise as it is simple, as profound as it is accessible, the fruit of an authentic contemplative life.' *Living Spirituality Network*

'Hearing the voices – sharing the perspectives in the victims/survivors sector' by Katy Radford and Sara Templar, Community Relations Council, 2008 A recent research report with recommendations for CRC's work with government, Victims' Commissioners, and community-based sector groups. Available to download at: www.nicrc.org.uk/services/publications

'Inter-Church Relations in Ireland: Developments and Perspectives', by Brendan Leahy (ed), Veritas, Dublin, 2008. €14.95. This celebratory book of individual essays on the current state of Irish inter-church relationships has been published as a tribute to mark the 25th anniversary of Bishop Tony Farquhar's Episcopal ordination and his tireless contribution to ecumenism, both within Ireland and internationally (see Ecumenical Congratulations above).

'International Review of Mission' – a quarterly publication from the World Council of Churches is available for reading at the Inter-Church Centre in Belfast (but not to be taken away)

'Ireland and Global warming.' This conference was organised by Christians in Science in February 2008 with key inputs from Prof. Sir John Houghton, Prof Bob White and other climatologists, who offered practical challenges and actions to Christians on their God-given responsibility for caring for creation. Further detail: www.cis.org.uk/ireland and www.iri.org.uk. *Presbyterian Herald* April 2008

'Jesus – social revolutionary' by Peter McVerry SJ, publ. Veritas 2008

Written by a social campaigner with much experience in working with homeless young people in Dublin, this resource challenges churches to take a much greater role in promoting social justice and in critiquing the increasing inequalities in the Celtic Tiger economy. The author argues for a spirituality of 'letting go' of the values of individualism and consumer capitalist economies.

'Living by Grace – moments of Grace for each day of the Year' compiled by Pauline Webb and Nadir Dinshaw, SCM-Canterbury Press, £9.99 This is a new edition of a collection of readings on grace and the way it comes flooding into our lives, often when we least expect it, from surprising people and strange places. *Living Spirituality Network*.

'Building a multi-ethnic church' by Linbert Spencer, SPCK 2007. £9.99

Many churches in Britain and Ireland have people from different ethnic backgrounds in the congregation and feel this makes them a multi-ethnic church. But there is often a failure to understand the difference between allowing people to participate in the church and actively seeking the participation of those not already doing so. This book aims to encourage church leaders to value ethnic diversity, develop programmes of action to teach and encourage all church members to

recognise the value of diversity and help make the Church more like heaven. *Racial Justice Today*, Winter 2008

'New loyalties – Christian faith and the Protestant working class' by Philip Orr, publ Centre for Contemporary Christianity in Ireland, 2008. £9.99

This book examines issues of social deprivation, the demise of the church's presence in the inner cities, the history of conflict in Loyalist communities and the polarisation of class. It is a helpful resource for church and community leaders considering the challenges of post-conflict mission and the widening gap between the Protestant church and loyalist communities.

'Occupied with Non-violence' by Jean Zaru, Fortress Press, 2008

A collection of writings by the Clerk of the Ramallah Friends' Meeting (Dublin), most of them written during the course of the second Intafada. Available from Amazon or Barnes and Noble.

'Our Children, Our Church –child protection policies and procedures for the Catholic Church in Ireland' from the Irish Bishops' Conference. Children are a precious gift from God and need to be safeguarded by everyone. *Intercom*, April 2008

'The Place called reconciliation – texts to explore' by Dr David Stevens, 2008, £6.99. These Biblical reflections on reconciliation and related themes have been written out of the author's 40 years involvement with the Corrymeela Community in N. Ireland, A former General Secretary of Irish Council of Churches, David is the current Leader of Corrymeela Community.

'Poverty and Justice Bible' by the Bible Society

This resource highlights over 3,000 verses in the Bible that relate to God's passion about justice and poverty – 'we need to rediscover what the Bible gives us about justice ...by seeing the thread of justice throughout the whole narrative.' *Church Action on Poverty News*, Spring 2008

'The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience- why are Christians living just like the rest of the world?' by Ronald Sider, Baker Book House, US, 2005. Taking research from USA surveys, Sider presents the disheartening fact that in areas such as divorce, materialism, sexual obedience, racism and physical abuse, Christians (defined as Evangelicals and in slightly broader terms) fare no better than any other section of the population. So how do we 'be the church' rather than conforming to culture? He outlines how the church is called to be a holy, countercultural community with Jesus at the centre and living a new social order that begins to live now how the Creator intended. *Lion and Lamb*, Spring 2008

'What's the Story? – experiences of young migrant workers in relation to Work, Faith and Social Integration in Ireland' by Young Christian Workers Movement, Dublin, 2008

This action research project identified many positive experiences amongst the majority of migrant workers (85%) but also raised issues for churches. 'The Methodist and Pentecostal churches seemed to be far more advanced than other churches when it came to encouraging inter-culturalism as well as providing

practical ways of getting Irish and foreign nationals to engage together...in the main, churches didn't seem to provide any social or emotional support to migrant workers, and did little in the way of encouraging integration between Irish people and any of the migrant worker groups. The reports make a number of recommendations to faith groups, national chaplaincies, trade unions and YCW. Further details: www.ycw.ie

'Working out the Covenant – Guidelines for the Journey' by Gillian Kingston, Church of Ireland Publishing, 2008. €5/£3.50. Intended to be a helpful booklet for churches engaging with the covenant relationship between the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland (2002), this resource addresses some 'neuralgic points within and between our churches where we need to be alert to each others' sensitivities.'

'The Year of Living Biblically- one man's humble quest to follow the Bible as literally as possible' by AJ Jacobs, Amazon, £12.99. An account of an American agnostic Jew's attempt to live by all the famous and not so well known rules in the Bible.

DVD, website and media resources

'21st Century Parent'. A DVD of eight 15-minute sessions - plus a workbook – is available from Wesley Owen, £14.99. This excellent resource offers practical help and encouragement to families today and can be used as a course run by church groups. Fronted by Rob Parsons, Executive Director of *Care for the Family*, it is designed to help parents cope with the difficulties of parenthood from toddlers to teenagers, steering them through the worry, guilt and pressure that can often be overwhelming. *Presbyterian Herald* April 2008

Creation Time 2008: Hope for Creation- a time for worship and action in September 2008

Aimed at 'promoting sustainable lifestyles that reverse our contribution to climate change' (Third Ecumenical Assembly, Romania 2007), Churches Together in Britain and Ireland are offering a choice of two five-week resource packs for use in local parish and faith communities. Based on the Lord's Prayer and the Revised Common lectionary, these include free downloadable resources on sermon materials, worship, group study, action ideas. An Irish language version will also be available shortly. www.ctbi.org.uk

Children and young people: 'LightLive' – an easy to use free online resource for children's, youth and all-age ministry provided by Scripture Union. It offers an extensive archive of 10,000 activities with another 650 being added every three months. An aide to plan Sunday School, youth sessions or all age services. Further detail: www.lightlive.org
Moravian Messenger July 2008

Irish Christians online: This includes details of Willow Creek's Global Leadership Summit being held at UCD in Dublin from November 7-8. Further detail: www.irishchristians.ie

Life Fm

Ireland's first fully licensed full-time Christian radio station was launched in March this year. Based in the Deanrock Industrial Estate in Togher outside Cork city, its Board is non-denominational with Catholic, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist and Evangelical representatives, as well as people from other faiths.

Liturgy resources at www.liturgy.co.nz Compiled by Revd Bosco Peters, an Anglican school chaplain in Christchurch, New Zealand, this resource offers mission on the web with video links, blogs, reflections and reviews, as well as prayers and resources for Sundays and feast days. If you want to link your own parish site, contact liturgy.co.nz@gmail.com

'*The Power of Forgiveness*' by Martin Doblemeier, Horizon Productions, 2007

This 78 minute documentary features stories about forgiveness from Auschwitz, Belfast, Beirut, the Amish, Ground Zero and elsewhere with reflections from Thomas Moore, James Forbes and Marianne Williamson. The DVD is available from www.amazon.com

The Priests, Epic Records 2008. Fr Eugene O'Hagen, Fr Martin O'Hagen and Fr David Delargy, all school friends from the Diocese of Down and Connor, have recently signed a recording contract with Sony for £1 million and plan to release their first album in November with a proportion of any earnings being donated to a range of charitable causes.

Racial Justice Sunday - September 14

CTBI's Racial Justice Network is offering worship resources on this year's theme 'A banquet for all people' (Isaiah 25 vv 6-9) with biblical reflections, questions for discussion, worship suggestions, prayer cards, activities for young people, suggestions for community events and links to topical challenges. The 32-page booklet costs £5 and is available from Claire Hurley ph 0044 (0)207.6547254, ccrj@ctbi.org.uk or visit www.ctbi.org.uk

Sermons for kids- www.sermons4kids.com

A useful resource for anyone working with children at home or in the parish. Contains downloadable stories and activities to help children engage with the Gospel.

Intercom, April 2008

Soul Agenda

A recent survey of the 26 local independent radio stations in the Republic has named KCLR 96fm's *Soul Agenda* as the most popular religious radio programme amongst listeners. Presented by Vicki Sandall, a member of the Kilkenny Presbyterian Church and Fr Dan Carroll on behalf of the four local main churches, it is broadcast across counties Carlow and Kilkenny on Saturdays from 9am to 10am and can be heard via the web at www.kclr96fm.com. *Church of Ireland Gazette*, March 2008 and *Presbyterian Herald* April 2008

Feature Articles

Chiara Lubich, founder of the Focolare Movement, died on February 14th 2008. Many fondly remember her visit to Ireland in 2004. In this article, Rev Brendan Leahy outlines some aspects of her life and mission.
Source: *Intercom* June 2008

At her funeral service in Rome on February 18th last, three simple carnations lay on Chiara Lubich's coffin before the altar at the basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls—a reminder of the three carnations she bought after consecrating herself to God on the morning of December 7th, 1943, the date that was to mark the beginning of the Focolare Movement. About 30,000 attended her funeral. Cardinal Bertone, Secretary of State, who presided, captured the heart of things in saying "the life of Chiara Lubich was a song to the love of God, to God who is love," the God she and her companions had chosen when they saw the many ideals they had in life—study, medicine, art, marriage—put on hold or destroyed by the Second World War.

From the very beginning she had identified in Jesus' prayer *'that all may be one'* his last will and testament and made it her own. In promoting a spirituality of communion at every level of church life, she also pointed to the secret of unity – a love for Jesus Crucified and Forsaken seen and discovered in every division, suffering and disunity. To embrace him "always, immediately and with joy" and continue to love was one of her mottos. It was a way of encouraging fidelity to him, making of every obstacle a launching pad to always start again in living the Gospel art of loving and so always reaching out again to rebuild communion. And since "love conquers all" she evoked worldwide a lively response to her ideal of unity.

As early as 1948, when she moved to Rome, she met Iginio Giordani, a founding member of the Christian Democrat Party. He saw in her a 20th-century Catherine of Siena, whose ideas would influence not only the Church but also the political and social fields. He soon became with her a co-founder of the new movement then spreading not only through Italy but also beyond. The Italian Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi, one of the founding fathers of the European Union, was also inspired by her life and vision. Much later Chiara Lubich's intuitions resulted in a new school of economics - the Economy of Communion, which applied the movement's practice of sharing material goods to business enterprises - and the International Political Movement for Unity.

After a very difficult examination by the pre-conciliar Holy Office, Focolare was granted official Vatican approval in 1962. Throughout this period Chiara always affirmed the Church is "protector and mother". As it turned out, through the movement she was to contribute prophetically to the Church's own reassessment in Vatican II of the importance of the lay vocation, its return to scripture and emphasis on communion. Soon new branches were formed for diocesan priests, religious, seminarians, young people,

professionals and families. Chiara also had the idea of establishing small towns, such as the project in Prosperous, intended to envision what society could be like based on living the Gospel of mutual love in all areas of life.

As early as the 1950s Chiara enthusiastically took up the cause of ecumenism, firstly with German Lutherans and then with Anglicans and the Orthodox Christians. She met all the Archbishops of Canterbury from Archbishop Ramsey to Archbishop Williams. From the mid-1970s she became involved in multi-faith dialogue. She was the first Christian and the first woman to preach in the Malcolm X Mosque in Harlem, New York, where in May 1997 she addressed 3,000 African-American Muslims. By special permission of the Vatican, Focolare was the first Catholic organisation to admit members of other Christian churches and other faiths to its communities.

In her eighties Chiara's activities actually increased and she received numerous civic awards and honorary degrees. To mark her 80th birthday in January 2000, in an extraordinary warm letter Pope John Paul II, who had made a practice of calling her personally each year on the feast of Saint Clare, hailed her as "a messenger of unity and mercy among many brothers and sisters in every corner of the world".

At her funeral it wasn't only Catholic or Christian leaders who expressed their appreciation of what Chiara did. For Ajahn Thong, the abbot of a Buddhist temple of Chiang Mai, Thailand: "Chiara has lit a light for all in this dark world." But Pope Benedict's letter to Cardinal Bertone captured the sentiments of all. In saying there are many reasons to thank God for her life and mission, he spoke of her as a "woman of intrepid faith and a humble messenger of hope and peace" who founded a vast spiritual family "that embraces many fields of evangelization."

I conclude on a personal note. I met her for the last time in November last. She was quite feeble and could speak only with difficulty. She was obviously suffering. Apart from previous moments of darkness and difficult, the past four years were characterized by a "dark night" that time she said she was living "for society and culture". Her eyes still smiled and penetrated with that loving glance that had captured the hearts and minds of many worldwide. It reflected the initial choice made during the War and re-made so many times in life: "and we believe in love" (1 Jn 4:16). Further information: brendan.leahy@may.ie

CONNECT - Eileen Gallagher writes:

In January 2007 I began work for the Irish School of Ecumenics as support officer for Church Fora and other interchurch groups, building upon the work of the ISE Education for Reconciliation team over the past decade. Fora and interchurch group members represent a church membership seeking to play an active role in shaping the kind of society we live in and in building peace and reconciliation. In an age when increasing secularisation is pitted against increasing fundamentalism, they have a pivotal role in bringing

values of religious tolerance, openness, and respect, to civic activities. A theology of active commitment to peace building and reconciliation underpins all of the work and is vitally important, given the historic role of the churches in defining the boundaries of the groups in conflict in Ireland.

In April 2007, "CONNECT" was established as a forum for representative members of Churches Fora, Clergy and Interchurch groups. This Forum meets twice yearly. At the inaugural meeting the opportunity for mutual support and learning was welcomed enthusiastically by participants. Those who attend the meetings bring back to their local groups new ideas and strategies. The wider community benefits from increased local interchurch activity.

The second meeting of CONNECT, took place on December 1st 2007 at Tullylagan House, Cookstown. Under the title *'Things which worked'* presentations were made by Rev. Kenneth Hall (Cookstown District Clergy Forum), Pastor Robert Ritchie (Coleraine Borough Forum), Margaret Lyon (Raphoe Reconciliation project). The presentations were followed by workshops titled *'Making things work'*. Rev. Robert Millar (Maghera), the keynote speaker, made a presentation on *'The Maghera Experience'*. He shared with those present, insights on some very original community development work in which his churches are engaged.

The Spring 2008 meeting of CONNECT took place in the Long Gallery Parliament Buildings Stormont on April 28th. The theme for this meeting was: *Building Community: Churches in Partnership*. This theme explored the role of churches together in society, what the challenges and opportunities are and how partnership and collaboration are important for that role. Partnership extends not only to churches together but also churches in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations.

The opening session was addressed by the Social Development Minister, Margaret Ritchie. A panel discussion allowed an opportunity to hear from MLAs representing all of the political parties: Sean Neeson (Alliance), Jim Wells (DUP), Danny Kennedy (UUP), Francie Broly (Sinn Fein). The keynote input in the second half of the morning by Dr Johnston McMaster addressed the theme through the metaphor of investment. This focused on churches as communities of faith investing in civil society, social justice and peace and reconciliation.

We also publish a Church Fora Newsletter twice yearly. It is a learning tool and a way of disseminating ideas about what is possible, difficult, or achievable. The Newsletter profiles the work of individual Fora and provides opportunities for practitioners to have their say, reflect on their work, and highlight activities. Further information: Eileen Gallagher, email eccgallagher@yahoo.co.uk

Corrymeela: On 28th June 2008, Corrymeela Community had a Summer Festival with the theme, *"Sharing the Future, Sharing the Past"*. It was a one-day festival, with activities for all ages--workshops (covering topics from drama to politics to

environmental issues to sexuality and faith), arts and crafts, drumming circles, panel discussions, an evening concert, lots of activities for children/youth, lunch picnic and evening BBQ. It was a day of reflection, discussion, fun, celebration and music. It attracted over 500 participants coming to Corrymeela for this day of reconnecting with old friends and meeting new friends. It was a day to consider what it means to share; to share the past to be able to share the future, to be able to live in a shared community. To explore what Northern Ireland (and perhaps the rest of the world) needs to be able to deal with and find peace with the past to be able to build a more cohesive future as communities of diverse individuals.

"Personal relations and political relations must complement each other if "reconciliation" is ever to be an appropriate word for describing a society in recovery from old wounds." (Donald Shriver, Keynote speech at 2008 Corrymeela Summer Festival)

Corrymeela hopes to continue this tradition in the future and looks forward to connecting with old and new friends in future summer festivals. We hope to be able to provide such a space for all to come together in exploration of important issues for our society but to also find the space to celebrate and have fun together as a community. We look forward to future summer festivals and (re)connecting with old and new friends at Corrymeela Community.

Further information: www.corrymeela.org

Glenstal Ecumenical Conference

The 45th conference was held on June 24 – 26th in Glenstal near Limerick on the theme 'Love Bade Me Welcome . . . the costly grace of hospitality.' Rev Liz Hewitt (Methodist and member of IICC) attended it and shares these thoughts.

The familiar words of the opening line of George Herbert's beautiful poem, *'Love bade me welcome'*, eloquently conveyed the theme and set the atmosphere for this year's Glenstal Conference. The second phrase, *' . . . the costly grace of hospitality'*, pointed towards the theology and experience of God's grace which we find in scripture and in our Christian lives. It was a title and theme which strongly attracted and encouraged me to return to Glenstal for the annual gathering of Christians from many denominations in this island.

Professor Enda McDonagh, introducing the theme, reminded us that the idea of hospitality is rooted in the Benedictine tradition, and this is evident in the welcome one always receives at Glenstal. We are guests in this world of the Creator God, the guests of love, and at the same time we are hosts to one another. Hospitality / grace is costly – how do we extend that hospitality to one another, ecumenically, in this land?

The keynote speaker was to have been Amy Oden, a Methodist theologian and teacher at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington DC. Her recent scholarship has focused on the radical practice of hospitality in early Christianity and its challenge for

communities today. Unfortunately, for family reasons, Amy had to withdraw from the Conference. Hopefully there will be a future opportunity to explore this area with her, in Ireland.

The Conference organizers were put under pressure again when John Rackley, an English Baptist minister, who was to lead the Bible Studies, also had to withdraw because of family illness.

Fortunately two very able substitutes were found who stepped in at very short notice; the Rev Dr the Lord Leslie Griffiths, a former President of the Methodist Church in Britain and Rev Gethin Abraham-Williams, a Baptist minister and ecumenical consultant from Wales.

An Irish dimension was added to the conference when Dom Mark-Ephrem Nolan (from the Benedictine Community in Rostrevor), Dr Andrew Pierce (Irish School of Ecumenics) and Dr Fran Porter (a researcher and writer from Belfast) spoke of hospitality within the context of their own experience and research. There was a richness in their experience which would have warranted more time to explore in the programme had it been available.

I was challenged by the Conference to think more deeply about the significance and quality of the hospitality which a loving God extends to us and to test how we mirror that hospitality or welcome in our churches today.

Unity

Unity is not a thing to possess but a way of possessing;

Unity is not a gift to be given but a way of giving;

Unity is not a topic to teach but a way of teaching;

Unity is not a theory to learn but a way of learning;

Unity is not an opinion to hold but a way of holding;

Unity is not a resolution of strife but a way of striving;

Unity is not a creed to preach but a way of preaching;

Unity is not a God to serve but a way of serving;

Unity is not a question to ask but a way of asking;

Unity is not an answer to seek but a way of seeking;

Unity is not a journey's end but a way of journeying.

'Peace' by Richard Skinner quoted at Churches Together in England Forum 1997

Just a moment

- **Sermon preparation:** A boy was watching his father, a pastor, write a sermon. "How do you know what to say?" he asked. "Why, God tells me." "Oh, then why do you keep crossing things out?"
- 'People are like **stained glass windows**. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is light from within.' (Elizabeth Kubler Ross)
- *Where there is no **faith in the future**, there is no power in the present* (source unknown)
- Coincidences are God's way of keeping angels anonymous
- Over 200 million children, women and men were killed in **wars and armed conflicts** in the last century. Today spending on war and the development of ever more efficient

weapons exceeds \$1.2 trillion.... £10,000,000,000 is the amount the British government has spent in Afghanistan and Iraq since invading Iraq five years ago, according to the House of Commons Defence Committee. This could have built 40 hospitals and employed 45,454 extra nurses' *Peace Matters, summer 2008, p. 6-7, www.peacematters.org.uk*

- **Parables:** How many readers know how many parables there are in the Gospels and can you name them all? Answer: 'The exact number depends on your definition of a parable. If parable is taken to include proverbs, and simple comparisons as well as those in story form, the number is about sixty in all. Not counting all of these, the number is estimated as being between thirty to thirty-five.' *Moravian Messenger July 2008, p.79*
- In Christ we **belong** to one another. When Christians are separated, the message of the Gospel becomes inaudible. How can we communicate Christ's peace to all if we remain separated? Let us no longer waste so much energy in the oppositions among Christians, sometimes within even our congregations. Let us come together more often in the presence of God, in listening to the Word, in silence and praise. *Letter from Taizé 2008. Letter from Cochabamba*
- 'Today's challenge is to make **ecumenism** as much part of our daily life as worship, so that the world may believe.' *Bishop Richard Clarke speaking at the General Synod, Gazette 23 May 2008*
- **Ecumenism** among Christians should be about us Christians being filled with the Spirit and being attracted deeper into God and God's purposes. *Professor David Ford, Cambridge*
- Jesus amongst us make Jesus within us grow
- Only after the last tree has been cut down, only after the last river has been poisoned, only after the last fish has been caught, only then will you find that **money** cannot be eaten
Native American lore
- Calculate your carbon count number on www.change.ie and consider ways of reducing this
- Aramaic root of the word '**blessed**' means 'straightened up'; the Greek origins for '**Synod**' mean 'together on the way'; the Greek origin of the word '**parish**' is 'those living near or beside'. *Church of South India CSI Life March 2008*

Ecumenical Diary

Further updated information can be found on www.irishchurches.org

August 29-31 in Dublin

Discernment retreat facilitated by Tom Grenham SPS and Rita Kelly MMM at Orlagh Retreat Centre for missionaries discerning whether to return to Ireland or remain on overseas mission. Further information: ph.00353(0)1.492.3326, or www.imu.ie

Sept 1 – Oct 4

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland have prepared a range of free downloadable resources for local faith communities to develop a '*Time of Creation*' a European ecumenical initiative (an outcome from the

Sibi Assembly 2007) using the theme 'Hope for Creation: a time for Worship and Creation'. These will include a 5 week framework of readings, liturgies and sermon ideas, ideas for group study and action as well as children and all-age resources. Further details: www.ctbi.org.uk

Sept 14

'A banquet for all peoples' (Isaiah 25: 6-9) is the theme of this year's Racial Justice Sunday. CTBI resources with Biblical reflections, worship suggestions, activities for young people and suggestions for community events, are available for parish and local faith communities at a cost from CTBI Publications, Bastille Court, 2 Paris Gardens, London SE1 8ND. Further details: crcj@ctbi.org.uk or visit www.ctbi.org.uk/racialjusticesunday

September – April in Dromantine, Co. Down. An opportunity to learn and study together Mater Dei Institute, a College of Dublin City University in conjunction with Edgehill Theological College (Methodist) Belfast and the Society of African Missions (SMA) are offering a new inter-church Certificate in Theology at the Dromantine Conference Centre, Newry, Co Down. This three-year part-time course has 12 modules which will be offered on Monday evenings (7.30-9.30 pm) between September and April each year. These will begin on September 15th. Further information, contact Bernie at SMA Dromantine 0044(0)28 3082 1224.

Sept 24 in Dromantine, Co. Down

Your prayers are invited to bless this meeting of Irish church leaders in a prayer retreat led by Jean Vanier (Founder of L'Arche Community). 'May they be renewed by you and move forward together in all their rich diversity to be a servant community and a light of hope to this island and this world. Restore your Church, O Lord, for the living of these days.' Further details: Rev Dr Ruth Patterson, Restoration Ministries: office@restorationministries.co.uk

Sept 27

Back to Church Sunday is an initiative taken for the past 4 years by the Church of England, inviting neighbours and friends back to church. The Coordinator (Michael Harvey) is willing to come over and to talk about this to any group on this island. Ph 0044.7831.317871, www.backtochurch.co.uk

Oct 10 – 11 in Belfast

Global Leadership Summit 2008 aims to strengthen local leaders for the benefit of the local church. Speakers listed include Bill Hybels (senior pastor of Willowcreek Community Church) and Chuck Colson (Prison Fellowship Ministries). £81 regular rate for non-members – early bird discounts. Schedule details: ph.0845.1300.909, email info@willowcreek.org.uk or visit www.willowcreek.org.uk

Oct 17-19 in Roscrea, Co Tipperary

Annual Oak House retreat at Mt St Joseph Abbey starting at 5.30pm and led by Bishop Richard Henderson. Oak House is an ecumenical fellowship dedicated to prayer, healing and reconciliation. Further details: Claire Besnyoe, ph 091.843.004

Oct 29 – Nov 2 in Bose, Italy

The World Council of Churches' Faith and Order Commission will be holding this International Ecumenical Symposium on the theme 'A cloud of witnesses – opportunities for ecumenical celebration' in the Monastery of Bose, near Turin. Archbishop Rowan Williams will be delivering the keynote address. Cost €280. Further details: Secretariat, ph. +39.015.679.185, email convegna@monasterodibose.it or visit www.monasterodibose.it

October 30-31 in Birmingham

The next Future Church Conference is being held at Woodbrooke Quaker Centre, Selly Oak and being planned by the Centre for Mission Accompaniment Development Group. Further details: Global Mission Network (CTBI), ph. 0044(0)20.7654.7254

Nov 7 -8 in Dublin

Global Leadership Summit 2008 aims to strengthen local leaders for the benefit of the local church. Speakers listed include Bill Hybels (senior pastor of Willowcreek Community Church) and Chuck Colson (Prison Fellowship Ministries). €110 regular rate for non-members – early bird discounts. Schedule details: ph.0044.23.8071.0295, email info@willowcreek.org.uk or visit www.willowcreek.org.uk

Nov 13 in Cork

St Fin Barre's Cathedral Immigrant Support Committee is holding a Day Conference exploring questions of Theology, Immigration and Asylum from 10-4pm in the Clarion Hotel, Lapps Quay, Cork. Revd Prof Michael Conway (Director, Irish Centre for Faith & Culture, Maynooth) and Revd Dr Annes Nel (Asst Minister, West Bangor Presbyterian Church, NI) will be speaking. Cost €5. Register by 15 Sept by email to revnigeldunne@eircom.net or ph. 00353 (0)21 4963387 (Cathedral office).

Articles for next edition

The next edition of *Irish Ecumenical News* will be published in Advent 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 October 1st**. (Please include local contact details.) Help to contribute ecumenical information that's useful, that encourages, that is 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
August 2008

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