



Issue 51 Advent 2008

IRISH ECUMENICAL NEWS

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*An occasional ecumenical information resource for the 3,250 faith communities of the 15 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 Greek Orthodox Church in Ireland, The LifeLink Network of Churches, The Lutheran Church in Ireland, The Methodist Church in Ireland, The Moravian Church (Irish District), The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, The Religious Society of Friends in Ireland, 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”

Our Guest Editorial this season is written by Major David Jackson, Divisional Commander of the Salvation Army in Ireland which has been an active member of the Irish Council of Churches since 1965. The Irish Division currently has 20 Corps (churches) on this island, 8 social centres and employs a total of 400 staff, plus 45 Officers (ministers).



Once again, we are entering the Advent season - with all that it symbolises - in the secular world the buying of gifts and cards, the putting up of Christmas lights, decorations, and the children's excitement as they await Santa's visit! For us within the

church, it symbolises other things - the opportunity to lead our congregations on a journey towards the manger scene, the Candlelight services, the carol services and activities that annually appear at such time of year!

On a personal note, Advent brings with it the Salvation Army bands playing Christmas carols in shopping centres - an opportunity to spread the 'reason for the season' and the busyness of our Family Appeal, when working alongside our friends at St Vincent de Paul we hope to bring some extra cheer to hundreds of families across Northern

Ireland who otherwise might not have very much at Christmas! But what should it be? The dictionary tells me it's the season before the Nativity - the coming of Christ. It's the waiting for the fulfilment of prophecy in the coming of Jesus.

Some years ago, I heard a story I'd like to share with you. 'The Christmas cards were the last thing on the lady's mind, and in desperation, she quickly entered the card shop and bought what seemed the most appropriate - thirty cards of the same design! Such was the hurry that she signed those she needed to send, popped them in the post and thought no more about it. On Christmas Eve, she was looking at some of the spare cards she had not sent, and read, with some surprise, the words within: - **'Just a little note to say that a gift is on its way!!!'**

What a surprise for her!! What a disappointment for her friends who had received the card, but no gift came!

As we journey through Advent, we can do so with the certainty that the promised gift of a baby was fulfilled, and we can now anticipate that day when he will come again! There is no disappointment when we focus upon Jesus! Paul writes:- **'When the time had fully come, God sent His Son'. (Galatians 4:4).** May we share that news throughout our church programmes during this Advent season and I hope and pray that you will have a blessed Christmas.

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 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.

Note

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

Ecumenical congratulations to:

- **Bishop Tony Farquhar** who was invited as one of the Catholic delegates attending this summer's Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Communion
- **Clonakilty Methodist Church** for receiving the first award to be made by Eco-Congregation Ireland since its inception in 2005. The award is given in recognition of excellence in making and celebrating the link between the environment and faith Methodist Newsletter August/September 2008, p.3
- **Helen Smith** as Development Worker of the Centre of Contemporary Christianity in Ireland, contact: ph 028.9032.5258, email helen.smith@contemporarychristianity.org
- **Fr Eamon Martin** as Executive Secretary of the Irish Episcopal Conference based in Columba Centre, Maynooth. Contact: email ex.sec@iecon.ie
- **Paul McLaughlin** as Development Officer of NI Mixed Marriage Association (NIMMA). Contact: nimma@nireland.com
- **Fiona Murdoch** as Communications Officer (part time) of Eco-Congregation Ireland with responsibility to make contact with churches and parishes with various degrees of involvement in environmental work. Further detail: fionam1840@oceanfree.net, www.ecocongregationireland.org
- **World Council of Churches** which came into formal existence 60 years ago on 23 August 1948 in Amsterdam when delegates from 147 churches from 44

countries met to participate in the first and founding assembly. This included representatives from Anglican, Old Catholic, many Orthodox and nearly all Protestant churches, but notable absences included the Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox churches.

Worship, Devotional and other resources for local ecumenical groups

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2009

(January 18-25) 'Reconcile your People'

(Ezekiel 37) has been chosen as next year's theme by the Korean churches, who have found this passage resonates with their own sense of sadness over the division in their own country since the Korean War. We too feel the pain of a divided church and recognise the need to overcome the problems and obstacles that still divide the churches on this island as we pray and work together for the full visible unity of the Church. Downloadable resources are now available to help local faith communities plan local worship events as well as provide material for personal study and study groups during each of the eight days.

www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer.orders@norwichbooksandmusic.co.uk, or phone Churches Together in Britain and Ireland at 0044 027 654 7254.

China resources

For over 30 years, the China Forum (Churches Together in Britain and Ireland) has served the Irish and British churches with expertise, information, resources and networks about the Chinese churches. An Online China Study Centre provides resources for teachers, schools and churches who seek to add new dimensions to their classes, Sunday Schools and services which reflect the growing participation of their Chinese members. Lawrence Braschi has recently been appointed as the new Director of the China Desk and can be contacted at ph. 0044.207.654.7223, e-mail: Lawrence.braschi@ctbi.org.uk, www.ctbi.org.uk/cic

Facilitation

Yvonne Naylor, a fully qualified and experienced facilitator, is available to support local parish groups (eg. Sunday School, youth fellowship, post-confirmation class, small group leadership training, running a Lent course or parish weekend) in dealing with difference, living out faith as peacemakers, or training in diversity and inclusion. Further detail: ph: 028 9062 2312 Yvonne.naylor@ntlworld.com www.puppetwoman.org

Hope for Creation

A programme of web-based resources for local faith communities, including sermon

materials based on the Hope for God's Creation theme, can be freely downloaded from: www.ctbi.org.uk/creationtime

Intercultural Training (Hard Gospel)

Four regional intercultural training days, organised by the Hard Gospel Project and led by a leading anti-racism activist Benedicta Attoh, will take place through November and December for anyone looking to deal positively with issues of racism and interculturalism. The training days are designed to help church members acquire the necessary awareness to understand and meet the challenges associated with living and working in an ethnically diverse society, especially during a period of economic downturn. They will also provide information on the processes and manifestations of racism (individual and institutional) and the strategies to deal with it. The training days are on Saturdays from 10:00am to 4:30pm in the following locations:

November 15 *Cally* Parish Church, *Co Sligo*

November 22 *Aslan* Centre, *Knocknagoney, Co Down*

November 29 *St Andrew's* Parish Centre, *Lucan, Co Dublin*.

December 6 *Limerick* Methodist/Presbyterian Church, *Limerick city*.

While there is no cost for participants, space is limited, therefore for more information or to sign-up online, either visit www.hardgospel.net or write to The Hard Gospel Project, Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Dublin 6.

Lent 2009

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) will again partner BBC Radio 4 and BBC Local Radio to provide a rich worship and prayer resource for Lent 2009 on the theme '**Sense making Faith – observing Lent through the Senses.**' Each week begins with Sunday Worship on BBC Radio 4 (0810-0850), complemented by additional programmes on the Daily Service (0945-1000 BBC R4 LW), and Sunday morning BBC local radio programmes will also carry special items based on the themes of the course. The radio programmes will have downloadable resources for groups and individuals (www.sensemakingfaith.org.uk) - to go live 1st January 2009). These will also be available through the BBC Religion and Ethics (www.bbc.co.uk/religion) and the BBC Local websites (www.bbc.co.uk/local), and will be usable with, or independent from, the radio programmes. Sunday Worship and the Daily Service are available on the BBC iPlayer. The first Sunday Worship will be on 1 March (St David's Day and the first Sunday in Lent). Each week, an invited preacher will reflect on a story of Jesus in which a sense, or the lack of it, plays a key role. Further detail: Rev Peter Colwell, Secretary for Church Life and Inter Faith Relations (CTBI), ph.0044.20.7654.7216.

Prayer used at recent meeting of Clonard Fitzroy Fellowship

Lord Jesus,

We give you our hands to do your work.

We give you our feet to go your way.

We give you our eyes to see as you see.

We give you our tongues to speak your words.

We give you our minds that you may think in us.

We give you our spirit that you may pray in us.

Above all, we give you our hearts that you may love in us, love the Father and all mankind.

We give you our whole selves that you may grow in us, so that you, Lord, may be the one who lives, works and prays in us. Amen

The Prayer of the Empty Water Jar

Jesus, I come into the warmth of your presence knowing that you are the very emptiness of God. I come before you holding the water jar of my life. Your eyes meet mine and I know what I'd rather not know. I came to be filled, but I am already full. I am too full. This is my sickness. I am full of things that crowd your healing presence. A holy knowing steals inside my heart and I see the plain truth. I don't need more – I need less – I am too full. I am full of things that block out your golden grace. I am smothered by gods of my own creation. I am full of my opinions and narrow attitudes; full of fear, resentments and control; full of self-pity and arrogance. Slowly this terrible truth pierces my heart. I am so full there is no room for you. Contemplatively and with compassion, you ask me to reach into my water jar. One by one, Jesus, you enable me to lift out all the things that are a hindrance to my wholeness. I take each one to my heart and I hear you asking me, 'why is this thing so important to you? Like a murmur of a gentle stream, I hear you calling 'Let go. Let go. Let go!' Finally, I sit down with my empty water jar. I hear you whisper, 'you have become a space for God, now there is hope, now you are ready to be a channel of life, you have given up your own agenda. There is nothing left but God.'

Nicholas Hutchinson

Prayer for unity

from the Northumbria Community

Almighty God, Creator of all things, maker of all people, grant that we may find a unity in you; that we may grow together in a bond of peace; that we may share with justice, the rich resources of the world; that no one may be in hunger, or oppressed; that none of your creation may be spoiled or abused. We ask this in the name of him who gave himself for the world, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Reconciliation

'The restoration of right relationships is at the heart of the Gospel.... Reconciliation involves

two. It has something to do with giving us back to each other or maybe recognising for the first time the gift that we are to each other. It means walking together again. It is a huge challenge and requires a great generosity of spirit from both parties.'

Rev Dr Ruth Patterson in *Faith and Friendship Guidelines* 2008-9 pp.34-5

Unity

'Unity is a gift. It has to grow, so don't give in to discouragement... Full unity can be achieved because we have the certainty that the Lord Jesus will never abandon us in the search for unity...The heart of ecumenism is prayer'.

(Pope Benedict XVI, Pentecost, *Intercom* Summer 2008, p.6)

News and stories from Irish ecumenical groups

83 Students attending ecumenical Theology course

On September 15, the General Secretary of ICC launched the Exploring Theology Certificate course in the Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre, just outside Newry. Over 80 students from different backgrounds and traditions have enrolled in the three-year programme, which is being organised through the partnership of the Mater Dei Institute in Dublin, the SMA Fathers (Society of African Missions) in Dromantine and Edgehill Theological College of the Methodist Church in Belfast. Accredited by Dublin City University the course is partially funded by a European Union Peace III grant. Further detail:

Dr Scott Boldt, ph 028 9068 6933 or

rec@edgehillcollege.org

AICCMR prepares to launch Migrant church Directory by Rob Fairmichael

The church scene in Ireland has altered radically with inward migration. In just a decade or two, the number of different churches and religious groupings, as well as languages used for worship, has increased very considerably. The Directory of '*Migrant-led Churches and Chaplaincies*' being produced by AICCMR (All-Ireland Churches Consultative Meeting on Racism) will list around 350 examples, mainly in the Republic but also in Northern Ireland. It is hoped that this new Directory – which will appear in a printed edition and be updated on the inter-church website (at www.irishchurches.org) will make this 'new church' presence much more visible and enable contact. Listings will be provided on a county by county basis so newcomers as well as 'old comers' will find it easy to know what is in existence near them. But it is recognised that the situation is dynamic and changing rapidly – which is why the website version will be updated as necessary. Copies will be available from the Inter-

Church Centre, as well as on the website (there will be a link on the home page when the Directory is published in December). AICCMR brings together the gifts and expertise of a small committed group of individuals from the Catholic, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist and independent churches. They commissioned the research that was undertaken by Dr Alan Bruce, Rev Dr Livingstone Thompson and Ms Yvonne Naylor covering both jurisdictions.

Bible study

Speaking at the recent Ordinary General Assembly of Catholic Bishops at the Vatican, Cardinal Séan Brady paid tribute to the Protestant contribution to biblical study, the biblical emphasis of the Reformation and the place of the Bible in the Protestant family. Addressing the bishops, he said 'one of the things we could profitably learn from the Protestant tradition is the custom of having a Bible in the home and reading it often as a family.'

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Christian Meditation

It has been said that prayer is talking to God while meditation is listening to God. Body-mind meditation can help Christians discover that peace that lies far beyond human understanding (Philipp.4.7) and the close connections between breath, wind and spirit. Louis Hughes OP from Kilkenny has lived in India for some years and is offering a range of resources and retreats in Christian meditation and spirituality. Further details: www.bodymindmeditation.ie

Ecu-mandments

(Bishop Tony Farquhar's Decalogue)

- (1) You shall not confuse ecumenism with community, political or social relations;
- (2) You shall have a healthy pride in and respect for your own tradition;
- (3) You shall have pride in and respect for other traditions as for your own;
- (4) You shall not be smug or self-righteous within your own tradition;
- (5) You shall not be smug or self-righteous in your relations with other traditions;
- (6) You shall not claim to represent anyone other than yourself when you have moved outside the official teaching of your own Church;
- (7) You shall pray for unity in prayer within your own tradition;
- (8) You shall pray for unity in prayer between your traditions;
- (9) You shall be thankful for what has already been achieved ecumenically;
- (10) You shall smile ecumenically and some day the people of God will smile with you.

Inter-Church Relations/B. Leahy (2008), p.23

Enniskerry Gospel Choir

For the past five years, this ecumenical choir has been singing each month in the Church of Ireland and Catholic parishes in Enniskerry, Co Wicklow. It recently appointed a new Musical Director, Siobhan Kennedy-Perri.

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Habitat for Humanity Northern Ireland

The goal of this non-profit, non-denominational Christian housing movement is to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness from the world and to make adequate affordable shelter a matter of conscience and action. They invite people of all backgrounds, races, and religions to build houses together in partnership with families in need. Supporters are urged to support World Habitat Day with its focus on the lack of secure tenure for the 1.6 billion people living in substandard/slum housing around the globe. Further details: Jackie Trainor, ph 028.9024.3686 ext 230, or email jackiet@habitatni.co.uk

Irish church leaders

Church leaders from across Ireland met together in Dromantine Conference and Retreat Centre, Co. Down on 28 September to consider their responsibilities as part of a community 'Moving Forward Together in Diversity'. The day was organised by Restoration Ministries, whose Director is Rev Dr Ruth Patterson. The church leaders were led in their reflections by Jean Vanier, the founder of the L'Arche community, who reminded them of the prophetic role of the weak and despised in any real change. 'The change that really matters is a change of heart' he said. 'Such change is made possible through meeting in true communion, and is the gift of the weak and the vulnerable to humanity.' The church leaders were challenged to 'move beyond their clan' and to risk humiliation in the search for love in a broken society and world. Church leaders acknowledged the importance of this task and agreed that the search for unity was a question of vulnerability and service rather than structures and bureaucracy. Further detail: Eithne Agnew, Restoration Ministries ph 028.9062.1867, email office@restorationministries.co.uk

ICC membership policy

The Executive of ICC recently updated its policy about Council Membership.

'The Irish Council of Churches (ICC) seeks to create spaces where Irish churches from all traditions may pray, dialogue and act together. The Council invites written applications for membership from:

(a) churches, or recognised associations of churches within one Christian tradition, having a reasonable spread of congregations on the island of Ireland, and

(b) churches, which, while only having a few worship centres on the island of Ireland, are part of much larger historic churches with significant membership in other places in the world and who: accept the constitution of ICC; accept that membership of the ICC involves active participation with the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland in the Irish Inter-Church Meeting; have demonstrated evidence of inter-church engagement and commitment on this island; have their own church policies in place to protect children and the vulnerable using their facilities or service ministries; are willing to test out their commitment and understanding about membership by journeying with the other member churches of ICC over a 12 month period with opportunity to participate in meetings of the ICC Executive with the freedom to speak but not vote; are committed to participate in the life of the Council's activities; pay an annual subscription and attend the Annual General Meeting; are broadly acceptable to the ICC member churches. Although the Irish Council of Churches was from its inception (1922) based on a *cooperative* rather than a *credal* model for ecumenical endeavour, it would nevertheless understand itself as basing its fellowship around an affirmation of Christian faith which – in company with other ecumenical bodies – proclaims Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures and seeks to fulfil a common calling to the glory of the One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.' Applications for membership are invited from interested churches. These need to address the above criteria and can be sent to the General Secretary at the Inter-Church Centre in Belfast.

ICC representatives

At the last Executive meeting, the following were appointed to represent the Council and report back to the member churches:

- **Churches Together in Britain and Ireland:** Denise Wright (LifeLink Network of Churches, Belfast) on Churches Racial Justice Network for three years; Rev John Marchant (Church of Ireland, Dublin) on Churches International Student Network for three years; Norman Richardson (Presbyterian, Belfast) on Churches' Inter-Religious Network for three years; Canon Paul Hoey (Church of Ireland, Fermanagh) on Global Mission Network for one year; Rev Dr Allen Sleith (Presbyterian, Newtownards) on the Editorial Group preparing materials for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.
- **Conference of European Churches** 13th Assembly in July 2009 in Lyon (France): Bishop Richard Clarke (Church of Ireland, Meath & Kildare).

Irish Inter-Church Committee

At its last meeting in September, the Committee listened to a presentation from the Parish-based Integration Project and made progress on discussing an ecumenical appointment in the Republic, a draft statement on the Sibiu Assembly, and a future Forum structure. The Committee next meets on November 27.

Limavady's attempt to deal with its past

Local media attention recently focused on an incident that took place in Limavady on Christmas Day 1984 when Rev David Armstrong crossed the road from First Presbyterian Church to shake hands with Fr Kevin Mullan. The latter was celebrating Mass in Christ the King Church shortly after it had been repaired following a loyalist paramilitary bomb attack. The gesture attracted both death threats and international attention at the time, forcing Rev David Armstrong and his family to leave the town. A member of the Limavady Borough Council recently tabled a motion to confer the Freedom of the Borough on these clergy and heal an ongoing sore. The motion, however, failed to reach the required two-thirds majority. The mover of the motion commented that 'this vote shows that while some people have advanced in terms of their attitudes over the last 25 years, a lot of work still has to be done.' Irish Times 1/10/2008

Lisburn City Centre Churches

Clergy from the local Catholic, Christian Fellowship, Church of Ireland, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches in Lisburn recently launched an eight-session parenting course, in conjunction with Care of the Family and the Lisburn City Council's Good Relations Programme. This new initiative explores in a practical way many of the major issues, pressures and worries confronting present-day parents. The local church leaders meet monthly for breakfast and fellowship and have organised an open-air Good Friday service this year, as well as a Global day of Prayer service.

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NI Mixed Marriage Association (NIMMA)

Established in 1974, NIMMA is committed to 'supporting couples who are united in love across traditional Christian divisions and promoting acceptance of those relationships within NI society.' Mixed marriage may apply to marriages between Christians and non-Christians, as well as between Catholics and members of Protestant churches. NIMMA offers leaflets, booklets, internet links, information about inter-church courses, as well as personal support to help couples with advice and information. Two of its stalwart members, Anne and William Odling-Smee, recently clocked up around 7,000 miles to

attend two Interchurch Families' conferences. They were warmly welcomed in Derbyshire at a conference to mark the 40th anniversary of the Association of Interchurch Families and in Louisville, Kentucky where their American counterparts hosted a series of talks put together by that driving force behind the international groups, Fr George Kilcourse. Anne and William were struck by the fact that while NIMMA has the extra problem of community relationships within Northern Ireland, as well as church relationships, the Association remains very much part of the international scene. Further information contact Paul McLaughlin (Development Officer) email: nimma@nireland.com, ph 028.9023.5444 (Mon-Thurs 9.30-12.30), www.nimma.org.uk. Another resource is www.interchurchfamilies.org.uk

Operation Mobilisation's Logos Hope

Logos Hope is a 12,519 ton ship run by Operation Mobilisation to build Christ's Kingdom in partnership with like-minded churches in every port that they visit. The ship will be docking in Belfast in early 2009. Described as the largest floating bookfair, the ship has an unpaid crew of Christians from 40 different nations and welcomes over one million visitors a year in ports around the world. Further details: John McIlvenna ph 078.1696.9352 email john.mcilvenna@uk.om.org.

Methodist Newsletter Nov 2008 p22

Strong Words

Strong Words is dedicated to sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in an informal way to all sections of the community. It consists of a group of men who were bouncers and bodybuilders, had addictions to alcohol and drug abuse, but having let Jesus into their lives have now turned their backs on their past. They are available for bookings to talk to church groups. Further details: www.strongwordsni.co.uk

Ecumenical news and stories beyond this island

Abraham Path Initiative

A 1200 kms route of cultural tourism is being planned to retrace the journey made by the Patriarch Abraham through the heart of the Middle East four thousand years ago. Over 3.5 billion people – half the human family - can trace their history of faith back to Abraham, who is considered the father of monotheism. The initiative is being planned by an international NGO founded in 2007 and their intention is to foster peaceful dialogue among Jews, Christians and Muslims who can all trace their spiritual roots to this man. Starting where Abraham is believed to have been born in the Turkish city of Sanliurfa, the route will symbolically follow his journey to the

Promised Land and end at his tomb in Hebron, south of Jerusalem. In July, an international group of young people opened a 50 kms section of the Path in Palestine by walking from Nablus to Beichtin/Bethel. One young walker said, 'the Abraham Path is now for me a path of friendship of students from America, Europe and the Middle East with a physical and spiritual bond with the land and villages of Palestine'. Further details: info@abrahampath.org, www.abrahampath.org

Christian Enquiry Agency

This is an agency of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and has worked on behalf of all the major churches over the past 20 years to provide opportunities for people to enquire about Christian faith and be linked to local churches. This year it initiated the Heavenly Recipes for Hope booklet and next year it plans to redevelop its website www.christianity.org.uk, focused entirely around the needs of enquirers.

Christian persecution in India

During the last eight weeks of unabated anti-Christian violence in the eastern Indian state of Orissa, at least 54 Christians have been killed, more than 5,000 Christian houses looted and 142 churches and dozens of Christian institutions torched by Hindu nationalist groups in Kandhamal. With marauding Hindu groups forcibly converting Christians to Hinduism, more than two-thirds of the 100,000 Christians in Kanhamal have been refugees in jungles, relief camps run by the government or fled to other cities. During a visit to the area in October, Rev Sam Kobia (WCC General Secretary) expressed concern over this recent outbreak of violence and drew world attention that 'one of the greatest problems facing the world today is religious extremism.' He welcomed comments from Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh that Christianity is part of India's national heritage. Christians account for 2.32 percent of India's over one billion people.

WCC media release 16&20/10/08;

www.oikoumene.org/en/news

Vatican says Christians and Muslims have common family values

Senior representatives of the Vatican have used the annual Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue message to Muslims for the end of the month of Ramadan to urge the two faiths to work together in promoting family life. The Message signed by Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran and Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata, can be read in full at the Pontifical Council website

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_20080919_ramadan2008_en.html

Critics both inside and outside the two religions will point out that both the Pope and senior Muslim leaders have been strongly critical of feminism and opposed to the dignity and rights of gay people, indicating an agenda which some would see as narrow and restrictive rather than broad and life-affirming.

Ekklesia. Sep.22,

<http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/7728>

Ecumenical structures in Europe

Irish ecumenists will be interested to know that discussions are underway to bring about changes in the existing ecumenical structures between the Council of European Churches (CEC) and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE). Rev Jean-Arnold de Clermont, the current President of CEC, has challenged the Joint Committee of these two bodies 'to re-think the structures of ecumenical cooperation between the churches in Europe in view of a renewed common witness that offers a strong signal that the Churches are willing to change.' His vision was to create one ecumenical body for all of Europe that brought together Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants and Free/Pentecostal churches under one regional umbrella. The Joint Committee have now charged the General Secretaries of CEC and CCEE to come up with proposals for revised guidelines as to now the two bodies might work together in the future and report to their next meeting in 2009.

CEC Monitor April 2008

European Protestant Liberal Network

This Network held its annual conference in late July in Belfast, hosted by the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland (a founding member of ICC) in their First Church in Rosemary Street. Established in 1998, this network is founded on the Gospel of Christ serving God in the world in the spirit of freedom and brings together those who share a liberal understanding of the Christian faith. Affiliated to the International Association for Religious Freedom, it is open to churches, groups who are committed to the Christian tradition in a responsible and thoughtful way. Further detail: www.liberalprotestants.net or Rev Nigel Playfair (Clerk), ph 028.9032.5365, www.nspresbyterian.org

Marathon Bible broadcast

Italian state television broadcast a live marathon reading of the whole Bible over six days and nights this month. Launched by Pope Benedict XVI to mark the opening of the Synod of Bishops, over 1200 Italians, including politicians, celebrities from the world of entertainment and sport and others, each read a passage of Scripture over a non

stop period of 138 hours. The Synod brought together more than 200 Cardinals and Bishops from all over the world to examine the modern lack of interest in the Bible. Cardinal Séan Brady and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin are amongst those attending the Synod, one of the goals of which is 'to encourage ecumenical dialogue, which is closely linked to listening to the Word of God.'

WCC winning essays

Six young theologians from Africa, Asia, Europe and North America won an essay contest on ***Prospects for Ecumenism in the 21st Century***, as part of WCC's 60th anniversary celebrations. The papers will be printed by WCC Publications and published on the WCC website.

www.oikoumene.org/en/news 04/07/2008

WCC General Secretary's term extended

Irish church leaders, ecumenical staff and theological students who met Rev Sam Kobia during his visit to Belfast and Dublin in May 2007 will be interested to know that his term as WCC's General Secretary has been extended until his successor is appointed in September 2009. Earlier this year, he had announced he would not seek a second term of office. media@wcc-coe.org 25/9/08

News and stories from our member churches

Church of Ireland

The House of Bishops launched their Vision Statement at the General Synod in May.

One section reads: 'The Church of Ireland, as an authentic part of the universal church of God, is called to develop growing communities of faith, in and through which the Kingdom of God is made known, and in which the whole people serve together as followers of Jesus Christ for the good of the world and to the glory of God. In the power of the Spirit, our mission requires us to order our contemporary worship and life in a manner that nurtures *growth*, promotes *unity* and liberates us for *service* in the world that is God's.'

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50th International Eucharistic Congress

Pope Benedict XVI has chosen Dublin to host this next major congress in 2012. This is a particular honour for the Catholic Church in Ireland as the Congress will celebrate its Golden Jubilee and mark the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council.

Calvin's 500th anniversary

The 500th anniversary of the birth of the Protestant reformer John Calvin will be commemorated by Reformed/Presbyterian Christians during 2009. A

specialty written anniversary hymn composed by Rev Greg Scheer (USA) can be heard on:

www.calvin09.org

Presbyterian Church Notes Irish Times 25 Oct 08

Catholic Church from Fr Colin Grant

Monsignor Noel Treanor was ordained as the 32nd Bishop of Down and Connor in St Peter's Cathedral, Belfast on Sunday 29 June 2008, the feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. The congregation included representatives from every parish in the diocese and a large number of friends and colleagues from Brussels through his work as Secretary General of COMECE since 1993. There was a strong ecumenical representation present in the Cathedral including His Eminence Metropolitan Athanasios of Achaie, Director of the Representation of the Church of Greece to the European Union; Rt. Rev. Harold Miller, Bishop of Down and Dromore; Rt. Rev. Alan Abernethy, Bishop of Connor; Rev. Dr Donald Watts, Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland; Rev. Donald Ker, Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland; Rev. Dr Houston McKelvey, Dean of St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast and Mr Michael Earle, Executive Secretary, Irish Inter-Church Meeting.

Bishop Anthony Farquhar celebrated, along with Bishop Patrick Walsh, the Silver Jubilee of his ordination as Auxiliary Bishop of Down and Connor in May 2008. To mark the occasion and to celebrate Bishop Tony's dedication to the cause of ecumenism locally and internationally, Professor Brendan Leahy, Professor of Systematic Theology at St Patrick's College, Maynooth, has edited a new collection of essays and papers entitled '***Inter-Church Relations, Developments and Perspectives- a Tribute to Bishop Anthony Farquhar***'. (Veritas). Contributors include Cardinal Séan Brady, Cardinal Walter Kasper, Bishop Sam Poyntz, Rev Ray Davey and Mr Michael Earle. The book enjoyed two launches: in Belfast where Alf McCreary, before a packed audience in the Good Shepherd Centre, congratulated and thanked Bishop Farquhar for his contribution to the ecumenical life of the city and in St Patrick's College, Maynooth, where, once again before a large audience, Bishop Donal Murray of Limerick, paid tribute to the contribution made by Bishop Tony to the national and international ecumenical movement.

Chaplaincy in the Dublin port and airport

Captain John Parrott (Salvation Army) has recently been appointed as Chaplain to the Dublin Port and Airport. His work involves him in pastoral visitations

to ferry crews & passengers; workplace visitations; Port and Terminal patrols; working with socially excluded groups (alcoholics, homeless) at each venue; providing a confidential & independent pastoral care; launching a new email prayer link (DublinPastor@gmail.com); and hospital visitation of the sick from Dublin Airport and Port. He works with crews of airlines and ferry operators; commerce and businesses at both venues; statutory agencies (An Garda Síochána, Customs, Immigration, Airport/Harbour Police); truckers and management; passengers experiencing bereavement, anxiety and other forms of distress. In one year at Dublin Port, he has made just under 500 contacts, been called out after hours 8 times and has supported staff on over 46 specific instances. He works with Canon Tom Haskins (Mission to Seafarers) in Dublin Port and Fr. Des Doyle (Our Lady Queen of Heaven Airport Church) in Dublin airport. Further details: ph 087.054.5664 (mob), email:

John.Parrott@salvationarmy.ie,
www.salvationarmy.ie

Reducing church energy bills while contributing to the electricity grid

St George's Church of Ireland parish on Belfast's High Street has recently installed 3 kilowatts of photovoltaic panels on its roof to help reduce their own electricity costs as well as earn sales from contributing to the grid. Further detail: Parish office ph 028.9023.1275, email

stgeorgesoffice@dsl.pipex.com,
www.stgeorges.connor.anglican.org

Irish Christianity course in Edgehill

On Tuesday evenings from 6.00 to 7.30pm in Edgehill Theological College (9 Lennoxvale, off the Malone Road), a series of lectures on ***Irish Christianity: Its History since the Reformation*** will be held until Christmas. The course started on the 30th of September but is open to anyone. The remaining topics will include: ***The struggle for the soul of Ireland: Christianity and culture in Ireland; The Churches and Home Rule; Plantation – whose land?; 1690 and all that; Politics and Religion around 1798; The Famine and After; The Penal Laws; Irish Churches: Contemporary Questions.*** Further detail: Dr Scott Boldt ph.028. 9068 6933, rec@edgehillcollege.org

Mass attendance in the Republic

According to the latest European Social Survey (2006/7), 'there has been a steady decline in the rate of decline of the proportion of Catholics attending Mass weekly or more often from 63.4% in 2005 to 56.4% in 2006/7, with more attending monthly (16.4%) than 2002/3 (14.4%)

Intercom July/August 2008 p.18

Ministry: Fr Aidan Troy OP

During the summer, this well-known Passionist priest from Bray was moved from the Holy Cross parish in Ardoyne (North Belfast) to a parish in Paris. He had arrived in the Ardoyne in July 2001 as the Holy Cross Primary School became the centre of a loyalist protest which made headlines around the world. The three month protest by loyalist residents at the Ardoyne interface saw Holy Cross pupils being escorted to and from the school by the security forces on a daily basis. It ended in November 2001 after the residents were promised social improvements and new security measures. He remained active as a church and community leader intervening on contentious local parades, teenage suicides and numerous other local issues.

Methodist Newsletter Oct 2008; Irish Times 18/8/08

Pan-Orthodox consultations in 2009

In a Message from the Primates of the Orthodox Churches on October 12th, His Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew drew attention to the commitment of the Primates 'to safeguard the unity of the Orthodox Church in the faith of our Fathers, in the common Divine Eucharist and in the canonical system of Church governance by settling any problems that arise ...in relations among us with a spirit of love and peace.' He reaffirmed the Primates' desire 'to swiftly heal every canonical anomaly that is foreign to Orthodox ecclesiology' and welcomed the Ecumenical Patriarchate's proposal to convene Panorthodox consultations (to include all Autocephalous Churches) on this subject during 2009.

Europaica 156

Understanding Icons

by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew speaking to a Plenary session in the European Parliament on Sept 24

'For Orthodox Christians, the icon, or image, stands not only as an acme of human aesthetic accomplishment, but as a tangible reminder of this perennial truth. As in every painting – religious or not and notwithstanding the talent of the artist– the object presents as two dimensional. Yet, for Orthodox Christians, an icon is no mere religious painting – and it is not, by definition, a religious object. Indeed, it is a subject with which the viewer, the worshipper, enters into wordless dialogue through the sense of sight. For an Orthodox Christian, the encounter with the icon is an act of communion with the person represented in the icon. How much more should our encounters with living icons – persons made in the image and likeness of God – be acts of communion!'

Whole talk <http://biserica.org/phpBB2>

Why Violence? campaign

'Why Violence?' is a new campaign initiated by Irish Quakers, concerned about the way violence infuses every area of society, locally, nationally and internationally. It is looking for support and ideas from diverse organisations and individuals with a view to making UN Day

of Non-Violence (October 2nd) each year into a festival of non-violence and violence reduction. 'We don't pretend to have the answer but we do know that doing nothing is unacceptable.'

Further detail:

whyviolence@quakers-in-ireland.ie

or Philip Jacob 01.284 5802.

INNATE *Nonviolent News* Issue 163 Oct 2008

Just a moment

The time is coming, when what you're called will not matter and where you go to worship will not matter. It's who you are and the way you live before God that counts. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That's the kind of people the Father is looking out for; those who are simply and honestly themselves before him in their worship.

Paraphrasing John 4 - 21:24 Fitzroy PCI opening liturgy Aug 2008

- With the international stock markets in turmoil due to the global financial crisis in recent months, the Archbishop of York was quick to point out the irony that governments can at short notice locate hundreds of billions in international currencies to bail out their own banks, but come up with very different actions when it comes to raising similar amounts of money to meet the Millennium Development Goals targeting world poverty.
- **The Paradox of our Age**
We have bigger houses but smaller families; more conveniences, but less time. We have more degrees, but less sense; more knowledge, but less judgement; more medicines, but less healthiness. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but we have trouble crossing the street to welcome the new neighbours. We have built more computers to hold more information and produce more copies than ever before, but we have less communication. We have become long on quantity, but short on quality.
These are the times of fast foods, but slow digestion; tall man, but short character; steep profits, but shallow relationships. It is a time when there is much in the window, but nothing in the room.
Dalai Lama
- 'Laughter is the shortest distance between two friends'
- 'As babies enter this world they face more chemicals in their bedrooms than their ancestors of one hundred years ago were exposed to in their lifetimes.'
(poster at Drumalis)

- According to the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, there were 328 global political conflicts taking place in December 2007, including six wars, 25 severe crises, 239 internal conflicts and 90 between states.
- 'The way the world is organised is wrong, because there is no place for us .we are equal to you. When a tiny part of humanity lives well, and 90 per cent doesn't live well, something is wrong is God's world'
(Salome Costas, a Brazilian social worker,
Quoted in One World Week Order of Service 2008)
- Addressing the Methodist Church's General Committee, Chris Elliott said, 'Inter-church relations need an emphasis on both relationships and structures. Structures move us forward, relationships keep us faithful.'
Methodist Newsletter November 2008, p.7
- 'If you listen together as one, you will hear my words; if you pray together as one, you will see signs, miracles and wonders; if you praise together as one, great spiritual power will be released; if you act together in My name, walls of obstruction will be demolished; if you speak together as one, My voice will be heard in the land. Our call is to listen, pray, praise, act and speak as one.'
Maranatha Newsletter Issue 115, (March 2008).
- People grow old only by deserting their ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up interest wrinkles the soul. You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence; as old as your fear; as young as your hope, as old as your despair. In the central place of every heart there is a recording chamber. As long as it receives messages of beauty, hope, cheer and courage, so long are you young. When your heart is covered with all the snows of pessimism and the ice of cynicism, then and only then are you grown old and fade away.
CSI Life Oct 2008 Issue 10
- **Reflections on a knife, fork and spoon**
from Traidcraft at Iona: justice and peace prayers:
Knife: Lord, with this knife you have given me the power to hurt or be useful. Please help me to use this and all that you give me to help and not to harm. Lord, this knife is useless without its cutting edge. Help me to be sharp and keen to work for you.
Fork: Lord, thank you for food and the farmers who sow and reap; for the suppliers

who buy and transport; for the retailers who sell, and for the means to prepare, cook and enjoy my meal. Help me not to be greedy and to eat only what is sufficient for my needs and not for my appetite. Help me to remember that I should live simply so that others may simply live.

Spoon: Lord, stir me today. Mix in my fear with my confidence, my doubt with my faith, my strength with my weakness, and make me whole, like this cup of (fairly traded) tea!

- **An old proverb** - quoted by Reg Bailey, Chair, Traidcraft Foundation
When we get what we deserve, that is justice.
When we don't get what we deserve, that is mercy.
When we get what we don't deserve, that is grace.

Book resources

Collision is a free monthly e-zine recently launched by the Bible Society (NI) for young people at Key Stage 2 level who want to hear how God is changing lives and communities around the world. Further detail: Julie Morre ph. 028.9032.6577, Julie@bsni.co.uk
C of I Gazette Sept 2008

Contemporary Catholicism in Ireland – a critical appraisal, ed. by John Littleton & Eamon Maher (Columba Press, 2008). This is a collection of thirteen essays written by well known contributors that 'provoke as well as provide food for thought ... on the state of contemporary Irish Catholicism offering anecdote and analysis in an attempt to determine how we have reached this particular juncture.'
Intercom October 2008

Empty Pulpits - Ireland's Retreat from Religion, by Malachi Doherty, Gill & MacMillan (2008). 'No country has discarded religion faster than Ireland...yet the Croagh Patrick pilgrimage still draws tens of thousands of people up a mountain one day every day...Ireland is on the cusp between faith and atheism, free now to think freshly about both.'

Encountering the Mystery, by His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, 2008. It introduces the reader to the richness and beauty of the Orthodox tradition and shows how this applies to important social and ethical issues of contemporary concern, such as environment, human rights, inter religious dialogue and social justice.

Evangelicalism and Conflict in Northern Ireland, by Gladys Ganiel, 2008, (Palgrave: New York). 'This book explores the role of evangelicalism in the conflict in Northern Ireland and discusses how it may contribute to a peaceful political transition. The author analyses the 'traditional' evangelicals who are associated with the Rev. Ian Paisley, as well as a new breed of 'mediating' evangelicals who have broken with the traditions of the past. Comparing evangelical politics in Northern Ireland to the US and Canada, this book sheds light on future directions for Northern Irish evangelicalism. The conclusion has global reverberations as it reflects on the place of 'strong' religions -- such as evangelicalism and other forms of fundamentalism - in contemporary world politics.'

Faith Reborn- Mission in a (Wonderfully) Strange New Ireland by Stephen Skuce, CC Academic Press (2008). 'In this book, the author looks at the current state of Irish Christianity in the light of post-Christendom and offers pointers to the way forward for mission and Church.'
Methodist Newsletter November 2008

For God's sake: the Christian Right and US Foreign policy, by Lee Marsden, Zed Books, London (2008). A must-read account written by an English academic and former pastor about the growing political influence held by an active lobby of up to 75 million conservative evangelicals in the USA. 'Underpinned by extensive interviews with key players', the book starts with a focus on their influence on domestic issues and moves onto their pro-Israel stance based on the blessings and curses of God's chosen people from Genesis 12.3. 'An attempt to consider the Christian Right on their own terms'... how they have sought to influence US foreign policy and their future plans in training a new generation of leaders to extend this influence in the future.'

Guide to Connemara's Early Christian Sites by Anthony Previt  (Oldchapel Press, 2008) describes the settlements of the early Christian monks who populated 25 of Connemara's most beautiful yet rugged coastline sites from the early Christian to the medieval period of Irish history.
C of I Gazette August 2008

Inter-Church Relations: Developments and Perspectives - a Tribute to Bishop Anthony Farquhar, by Brendan Leahy (ed.), (Dublin: Veritas, 2008). This book celebrates the commitment and sense of joy that Bishop Farquhar has brought to inter-Church relations over the twenty-five years of his episcopate. It discusses aspects of contemporary relations by presenting recent developments in both national and international dialogue and networking among Churches. Covering various inter-Church forums

and dialogues, it also offers theological considerations on inter-Church relations and reflects on practical and spiritual ecumenism.

Inter-cultural Insights, ed. Scott Boldt (September 2008). A free resource booklet collated and updated by the All-Ireland Churches' Consultative Meeting on Racism (AICCMR) offering Christian reflections on racism, hospitality and identity from the island of Ireland, as well as additional resources including games, ideas for scrapbooks and journals, quizzes, mapping exercises and plays on these themes. Available from Inter Church centre, Edgehill Theological College (www.edgehillcollege.org) and www.embraceni.org

The Minding of Planet Earth, by Cardinal Cahal Daly, Veritas (2004). Dr Daly addresses the relationship between religion, ecology and science, asserting that religion and science are complementary, not contradictory. He pleads powerfully for a more responsible use of the earth's limited resources and the reduction of the debt burden of poorer countries.

Greening the Church, October 2008

New Loyalties – Christian faith and the Protestant Working Class, by Philip Orr, Centre for Contemporary Christianity in Ireland, Belfast (June 2008). 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 gives case studies that model experimental and innovative engagement by churches with the Protestant working class. 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.

The Place called Reconciliation – texts to explore, by Dr David Stevens, Corrymeela Press (2008). These biblical reflections on reconciliation and related themes have been written out of the author's 40 years of involvement in the Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland and will be of interest to all working in the area of reconciliation.

Spirituality or Religion? Do we have to choose?, by Gethin Abraham-Williams (O-Books, November 2008, £11.99). A Baptist minister and former General Secretary of Churches Together in Wales/Cytûn, Gethin aims to help seekers as well as committed believers to see the relevance and importance of the link between spirituality and religion. 'It's less a matter of choice, more of seeing why and how those searching for God need both.' Highly commended by church leaders across the water. www.o-books.net

Who is my neighbour? – a church response to social disorder linked to gangs, drugs, guns and knives, by Joe Aldred, Sophie and Keith Hebden, Churches Together in England (2008). 'Gang-related crime is of growing national concern... This report is an expression of our churches' deep concern about negative gang-related social disorder and violent crimes; their effects upon society at large, particularly the young; and the perspectives of the churches on and contributions to finding solutions... If we recognise violent gang-culture as developing out of economic deprivation, the judgement of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25) reminds us that gangs are both a sign of God's presence and his judgement on our care for a neighbour in need.'

Work – Life Issues Bible Study by Beverley Shepherd, CWR 2008

This new Bible study on honouring God through work is designed for both group and individual study. Drawing on the book of Leviticus, the author suggests four ways we can fulfil God's calling in the workplace by being a model, minister, mover and shaker or a mouthpiece. Available from Wesley Owen.

Presbyterian Herald October 2008

Ecumenical Diary

Further updated information can be found online at www.irishchurches.org

November 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

November 8 in Lurgan

A morning conference (9.30-1pm) sponsored by the Presbyterian Church Peacemaking panel on the theme 'CSI – Ulster will be held in the Jethro Centre, Flush Place. Ten Conference speakers will address the new Shared Future language of 'Cohesion – Sharing and Integration', reassess where we are now in terms of peace and reconciliation, and present practical examples of good models which are working towards transforming our community. Further details, directions and registration before Nov 3: Laura Coulter, Church House (PCI), ph 028.9041.7211, Email lcoulter@presbyterianireland.org

November 9

A free downloadable Order of Service for Remembrance Day Sunday has been prepared by the Joint Liturgical Group of GB and the Royal British Legion for the use of member churches of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and can be obtained from www.ctbi.org.uk

November 12 in Belfast

As part of Irish School of Ecumenics' Public Theology Initiative, Fred Vincent will be speaking on *'Desecration during the Troubles'* from 12-1pm at 683 Antrim Road. As places are limited, if you plan to come please contact Jayme Reaves 028.9077.0087 or email reavesj@tcd.ie.

November 13 in Cork

St Fin Barre's Cathedral Immigrant Support Committee is holding this 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)21.4963.387 (Cathedral office).

November 20 – 23 in Antrim

Inter Church marriage preparation courses are being run by ACCORD at the Comfort Inn. Further details and costs from the ACCORD regional office (NI): contact ph 028.9023.3002, MPC@accordni.com www.accord.ie

November 22 in Belfast

CREED (Communities Regenerated Enabled Enriched and Developed) is holding its first annual conference at the Jethro Centre from 9.15-1.30pm with Bishop Ken Clarke as the keynote speaker. This (free) conference is aimed at helping Christian organisations to engage and extend God's Kingdom in the High Street and local community. Register before November 8. Further information: ph.028.3888.1529, email, www.creedireland.com
Presbyterian Herald Oct 2008

November 22 in Jordanstown

The annual Children's Ministry Conference 'Building Blocks' is being held from 10-4.30pm at the University of Ulster, Jordanstown and costs £28. Started in 2002, it is aimed at inspiring and giving practical skills to Sunday School teachers, Children's church leaders and kids' club leaders. Jointly sponsored by Scripture Union, Sunday School Society, Church of Ireland, Methodist Church in Ireland, Presbyterian Church in Ireland, South Dublin parishes of the Catholic Church and various independent churches, this year's

keynote speaker is Terry Clutterham, Director of Ministry Delivery, Scripture Union (England and Wales). Further detail: belfast@buildingblocks.ie, www.buildingblocks.ie

November 24 in North Belfast

Northern Ireland's first long term Icon exhibition will be officially opened by Metropolitan John Yazigi (Antiochian Orthodox Church) at the conclusion of the Hierarchical Vespers at 6:00 pm at the church's new premises on the corner of Cliftonville/Antrim Roads. Icons from Iconographers from all over the world are displayed, both original and copies. This is a long term project that will grow into being eventually open every day. Initially it will be open on Saturdays from 10 am to 4 pm and also during times of services. All are welcome. Further details: Rev Fr Irenaeus, Senior Priest, ph. 028.9071.2523, email irenaeus@btopenworld.com

November 27 in London

AGM of Christian Aid Great Britain & Ireland. Further details: ph. 028 9038 1204, www.christianaid.ie

November 28 in Larne

(World AIDS day) To highlight Christian Aid Ireland's work with people living with HIV and AIDS, an evening celebrating Advent Hope will be held at 7.45pm in First Larne Presbyterian Church with music by Renaissance and reflections from Lady Christine Eames and Dr Eddy Genece (from Haiti). Donations will be received for Christian Aid's HIV/AIDS projects. All welcome. Further details: Deborah Doherty, Church and Community Manager, ph 028 9038 1204, email ddoherty@christian-aid.org

November 29 in Dublin

The annual Children's Ministry Conference 'Building Blocks' is being held from 10-4.30pm at the St Patrick's Teacher Training College, Drumacondra and costs €40. Started in 2002, it is aimed at inspiring and giving practical skills to Sunday School teachers, Children's church leaders and kids' club leaders. Jointly sponsored by Scripture Union, Sunday School Society, Church of Ireland, Methodist Church in Ireland, Presbyterian Church in Ireland, South Dublin parishes of the Catholic Church and various independent churches, this year's keynote speaker is Terry Clutterham, Director of Ministry Delivery, Scripture Union (England and Wales). Further detail: dublin@buildingblocks.ie, www.buildingblocks.ie

November 30 in Coleraine

To highlight Christian Aid Ireland's work with people living with HIV and AIDS, an evening celebrating Advent Hope will be held at 7.45pm in Terrace Row Presbyterian Church with music and reflections for World AIDS day from Tendai Madondo and Dr Eddy Genece (Haiti). Donations will be received for Christian Aid's HIV/AIDS projects. All welcome. Further details: Deborah Doherty, Church and Community Manager, ph 028 9038 1204, email ddoherty@christian-aid.org

December 3 in Belfast

As part of Irish School of Ecumenics' Public Theology Initiative, Dr Gladys Ganiel will be speaking on 'Visioning Twenty First Century Ecumenism' from 12-1pm at 683 Antrim Road. As places are limited, if you plan to come please contact Jayme Reaves 028 9077 0087 or email reavesj@tcd.ie.

December 4 in Dublin

Mr Conor Lenihan TD, Minister for Integration, is expected to be launching a Directory of Migrant-Led Churches at the Redeemed Christian Church of God Headquarters, Jesus Centre, 119a Bluebell Avenue, JFK Industrial Estate, Dublin 12 (close to the Red Cow Roundabout). This is the result of research commissioned by an inter-church group, All Ireland Churches Commission Meeting on Racism, and undertaken by Revd Dr Livingstone Thompson of Meath Cultural Solutions, Dr Alan Bruce of Universal Learning Systems in Dublin and Yvonne Naylor in Belfast. If intending to come, please contact Philip McKinley ph. +353 (0) 871325531 to confirm the details and time of the launch.

December 5 in Belfast

A representative from the Office of First Minister/Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) has been invited to launch a Directory of Migrant-Led Churches at Edgehill Theological College. This is the result of research commissioned by an inter-church group, All Ireland Churches Commission Meeting on Racism, and undertaken by Revd Dr Livingstone Thompson of Meath Cultural Solutions, Dr Alan Bruce of Universal Learning Systems in Dublin and Yvonne Naylor in Belfast. ***If intending to come, please contact Dr Scott Boldt, ph. +44 28 9068 6933 to confirm the details and time for the launch.***

December 6 in Dublin

Carol Concert will be held at 7.30 pm in St Anne's Church, Dawson Street with a Salvation Army Band, Wesley College Choir and special guest

December 8 in Dublin

Christian Aid Ireland will be holding its AGM. Further details: ph 028 9038 1204. www.christianaid.ie

December 14 in Ballycastle

The Corrymeela Centre is celebrating its traditional Christmas Open Day between 2pm and 6pm at 5 Drumaroan Road and extends a warm seasonal welcome to visitors. There is a packed programme of entertainment planned including carol singing, face painting, storytelling and festive stalls. There is no admission charge and all our welcome, so please plan to visit Santa this year at Corrymeela and bring all the family. Further details: Becca Moody, ph 028 2076 2626, [email beccamoody@corrymeela.org](mailto:email.beccamoody@corrymeela.org), openevents@corrymeela.org

January 10 in Belfast

The Salvation Army will be holding their New Year Celebration at 7.30pm at their Belfast Temple, Cregagh Road with the leaders of the Salvation in the UK and Republic of Ireland Commissioners John & Betty Matear.

January 18 - 25

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Free downloadable resources are now available from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. Further detail: www.ctbi.org.uk

Next edition

The next edition of Irish Ecumenical News will be available in the New Year (only as an email edition and on-line) with information about regional services being held during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Please send relevant information to the Editor with date, time, venue, name of preacher, name and details of contact person ***before January 8th***. Many thanks

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

November 2008

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