



**Annual Report**  
**of the**  
**Irish Council of Churches**

**Submitted to the**  
**Annual Meeting of the Council**  
**March 1993**

## **ICC ANNUAL REPORT**

**for the year ending December 31, 1992**

### **Introduction from the General Secretary**

Under successive General Secretaries the Irish Council of Churches has had an important pioneering role in the areas of inter-church relations and peace and reconciliation since the start of the 'troubles'. In the late 1960s the Council helped to institute the process that led to the regular meetings of the Church Leaders. Links were developed at the same time with the Conference of European Churches that led to the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches and the Church of Ireland becoming members. This link also led to the setting up the Inter-Church Emergency Fund for Ireland (1974) with a joint ICC/Roman Catholic Church Committee which has now given out over £300,000 and channelled nearly £200,000 in designated money. The Fund in the 1970s was one of the most significant sources of non-governmental support for peace and reconciliation and community projects; in the 1980s the Ireland Funds, the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust, the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council and BBC Children in Need have increasingly taken over this role. The Joint Group on Social Problems (set up in 1970) and the Ballymascanlon Inter-Church Meeting Process (first meeting in 1973) were all the result of ICC initiatives and the Council undertook most of the servicing. The pioneering work of the Peace Programme (started in 1978), and operating in cooperation with the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace, was of importance in promoting the ideas of peace education and education for mutual understanding which has led to the incorporation of education for mutual understanding (EMU) into the core curriculum of schools in Northern Ireland. The Programme has just undergone reorganisation. The work of the Youth Committee in the early 1970s in developing contacts and cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church has borne fruit in the setting up of Youth Link : Northern Ireland between the four major Churches in Northern Ireland (1991). All of this is a significant record of achievement, but it raises the question - where to in the 1990s? This is why it is opportune at this time to look at the future vision, aims and structure of the Council.

Since the late 1960s there has been a significant development in institutional relationships with the Roman Catholic Church. We have some of the most developed relationships at institutional level in the world. However, recent Northern Ireland surveys show that there is little cooperation at local parish and congregational level or between clergy. Meetings and cooperation are very much the exception. The same surveys show a significant amount of hostility to ecumenism and inter-parish cooperation. This is most evident in some of our member Churches but it is a reality in virtually all. And the area in which cooperation is most

problematical is the more specifically religious, e.g. worship. Experience of, and attitudes to, inter-church cooperation are very different North and South. There are very much two significant realities. While there appears to be little structured ecumenism in the South, there are often good relationships between Protestants and Roman Catholics.

The Inter-Church Process that took place in Britain in the 1980s led to the replacement of the British Council of Churches with the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland (CCBI) in September 1990. CCBI is a body which involves the Roman Catholic Episcopal Conference of Scotland and England and Wales as full members (the black-led Churches are also a significant presence). At the same time as the creation of CCBI new ecumenical bodies, involving the Roman Catholic Church as full members, came into existence in England, Wales and Scotland. The ecumenical situation in Ireland now 'appears' anomalous with two ecumenical bodies, one involving the Roman Catholic Church and the other not. The creation of CCBI has also led to a change in ecumenical 'style'; the new body's emphasis is very much on the Churches acting and taking decisions together, rather than on a body which goes in front of the Churches.

The Member Churches of ICC responded differently to the setting up of CCBI. However, it now may be that the Churches in Ireland need to embark on their own inter-church process. Such a process would need to look at ecumenical relations in their totality - the existence of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting (last reorganised in 1984 and which in September 1992 employed its first part-time Administrative Officer), the Irish Council of Churches and the Church Leaders' Group. It would have to look at what the Churches expect from the different ecumenical bodies. Are they, for instance, simply instruments of cooperation or a means to a greater unity? At how they operate. What are the areas in which the Churches wish to cooperate? At accountability, cost, etc. It would have to recognise religious demographics, the lack of local ecumenical cooperation (which is a significantly different reality to that in Great Britain), the different situations North and South, and the existence of significant anti-ecumenical feeling in all our Churches. The Council has already started at looking at its future vision, aims and structures and has asked its Member Churches for their comments. It may be that something wider is now required.

This Report records a year of transition, of change of General Secretary and other staff, and of significant changes in the Peace Education Programme and the Irish Inter-Church Meeting. The future of the Peace Programme remains uncertain because of the review being carried out by the Department of Education (NI). The appointment of a part-time Administrative officer for the Irish Inter-Church Meeting means that for the first time the Council no longer undertakes the major component of the Meeting's servicing. The General Secretary of the Council remains Joint Secretary of the Meeting

and the Administrative Officer works from the Inter-Church Centre. There is, therefore, a close relationship between the two bodies. This relationship will inevitably evolve over time, but in what direction is not entirely clear. This will depend partly on whether this is now an appropriate time to embark on a wide ranging review of ecumenical relations in Ireland.

### **Officers**

The Rt. Rev. B. D. A. Hannon and the Rt. Rev. J. Cooper became President and Vice-President respectively at the Annual Meeting in March. We express our thanks to the outgoing President, Mrs. C. M. Barkley, for all the time and attention she gave to the activities of the Council during her term of office.

### **Staffing**

The Rt. Hon. D. W. Bleakley, C.B.E. left his post as General Secretary at the end of April. We pay tribute to all he did for the Council and for the vision he brought to its affairs. During his time as General Secretary from January 1980 the Council's finances were reconstructed and put on a sound footing. His contributions to the British Council of Churches, to the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland and to the Advisory Committee of the Conference of European Churches were particularly significant. His high profile in the wider community enabled him to effectively promote the messages of peace and reconciliation and the need for Christian partnership. We wish him well in all his various and manifold areas of interest. He was replaced by Dr. R. D. Stevens, the Council's Associate Secretary. A part-time Associate Secretary is currently being sought.

Following reorganisation of the Peace Programme and the creation of The Churches' Peace Education Programme as a separate legal entity, Mr. N.L. Richardson left the employment of the Council at the end of August to become an employee of the Programme.

Miss Jane Graves, who had been a fraternal worker from the Church of the Brethren since 1988 returned to the USA at the end of August. Jane had worked in the Peace Programme and in the general office of the Council. We would like to thank her and the Church of the Brethren for the contribution she made. Mrs. Debra Stewart joined the staff at the beginning of August as part-time secretary/book-keeper.

### **Meetings**

The Annual Meeting was held in March in Ballymena. The evening session took the theme 'The Churches and Evangelism - Good News or Bad?' and there was input from two local ministers. The Autumn Gathering was held in Belfast at which Sister Lavinia Byrne, Associate Secretary of the Community of Women and Men of the Council of Churches for Britain and

Ireland, spoke on the theme 'How do the Churches practice their Solidarity with Women?'.

### **Co-options**

Miss Pamela Lockie was coopted to the Council during the year.

### **The Role of the Council**

The Council has started a process of looking at its future vision, work and structures. The Boards of the Council were asked for their comments and the views of the Member Churches sought. A meeting took place in May between members of the Executive Committee and a sub-committee of the Standing Committee of the Church of Ireland. The Annual Meeting in 1993 will also be dealing with the topic.

### **Inter-Church Centre Company**

The Rt. Rev. Dr. S. G. Poyntz and the Rev. C. G. Eyre were appointed Trustees of the Company. They, together with the Rev. Prof. J. Barkley and Dr. David Poole, hold the shares of the Company which owns 48 Elmwood Avenue, on behalf of the Council. During the year the premises were repainted inside and out and a dry rot infestation treated.

### **COMMUNITY AFFAIRS**

**Deputy Moderatorship:** Miss Pamela Lockie was appointed Deputy Moderator in succession to the Rt. Rev. Dr. J. Mehaffey.

### **Advisory Forum on Human Rights**

The study on 'The Rights of Victims' was published in January and it received significant publicity. The future of the Forum was discussed during the year and it was agreed that human rights issues would be dealt from now on by the Board through ad-hoc working groups.

### **Inter-Church Emergency Fund for Ireland**

The following grants were agreed in 1992:

	£
Children's Community Holidays - towards new accommodation	3,000
Emigration Advice Unit - towards video	250
Youth Link: Northern Ireland - towards new office	3,000
Guildhall Press - towards booklet on churches in Londonderry	500
Peace and Reconciliation Group - towards project	750
Ballymoney Youth Outreach Trust - towards equipment	750
Long Tower Trust - towards insurance on building	500
Northern Ireland Children's Holiday Scheme - towards youth project	1,500
Holiday Projects West - towards training equipment	1,250

Springhill Youth Action Group - towards summer scheme	500
Alliance-Ardoyne playscheme - towards summer scheme	1,000
Foyle Cross-Community Group - activity costs	250
Killyleagh and District Development Committee - towards administration costs	250
Lynastown Graveyard Restoration Project - towards EMU projects	200
Upper Donegall Road Social and Recreational Committee - towards residential	250
Belfast Central Mission - renovation costs for building for new residential community	2,500
Women's Living History Circle - towards exhibition and production of booklet	500
St. Peter's Immaculata Youth Club - towards summer scheme	500
Centre on Research for Women - towards conference	250
Ardoyne Youth Club - towards summer scheme	250
Irish Inter-Church Meeting - further grant towards video	1,000
Holiday Projects West - towards new minibus	3,000
Cornerstone Community - towards renovations	3,000
Curlyhill and Area Community Association - towards refurbishment costs	750
Wishing Well Family Centre - towards Christmas project	200
Cashel Community Association - towards equipment	1,500
Irish School of Ecumenics - towards work of School	2,500

**The following monies were designated by donors:**

From Methodist Relief and Development Fund:

Ulster Quaker Service Committee	1,500
Lamb of God Community	1,500

Mr. Ian Slaine was appointed to the Committee in succession to the Rt. Hon. D. W. Bleakley.

**Irish Ecumenical Church Loan Fund:**

The Committee agreed the following loans in 1992:

St. Matthew's Church of Ireland Parish £5,000 for 5 years @ 6% towards renovation of Church Hall

Dismas House £12,000 for 5 years @ 6% - towards refurbishing of premises  
Queen Mary's YWCA £4,000 for 3 years @ 6% - towards upgrading facilities.

Irish School of Ecumenics £12,000 for 3 years @ 6% - towards work of School

Northern Ireland Children's Holiday Scheme £10,000 for 5 years @ 6% - towards refurbishing Inniskeel House

Lisburn YMCA £5,000 for 5 years @ 6% - towards help with present financial situation

Simon Community (NI) £10,000 for 5 years @ 6% - towards purchase of new property  
Kilskeery Youth Council £5,000 for 4 years @ 6% - towards refurbishing of Youth Centre.

Mrs. Linda Hopley was appointed to the Committee.

### **Peace Education Programme**

During the year a significant reorganisation of the Programme took place. A new legal entity was created called 'The Churches' Peace Education Programme'. Trustees have been appointed by the Irish Council of Churches and the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace who have delegated the management of the Programme to a Management Group of six people. The Programme took over the employment of staff in Northern Ireland from the beginning of September. A Memorandum of Understanding for the operation of the Programme was agreed between the Council and the Commission.

The Department of Education (NI) has only been prepared to extend grant aid to the end of August 1993 pending a review of all the voluntary education for mutual understanding/peace education projects. This has created a lot of uncertainty for the Programme and, in particular, for staff as employment could only be guaranteed for one year.

Mr. Paul Rogers, Mrs. Dympna McKearney and Miss Jane Graves left the Programme during the year. They were replaced by Mrs. Brigid Lenane, Miss Rosslyn McAuley and Mrs. Claire Geoghegan. Mr. Norman Richardson continued as Peace Education Officer.

Post-Primary modules on 'Human Rights' and on 'Non-Violence' are in the course of preparation. A reprint of 'Peacemaker' is being undertaken. The 'Churches and Worship' material for primary schools is being revised and discussion is taking place on a revision of 'Free to Be'. An adult study guide 'What the Bible Says About the Environment' was produced during the year which was circulated to clergy. The Resources Centre Catalogue is being revised for distribution to schools.

Mr. N.L. Richardson has continued his involvement in a wide range of contacts with schools and teachers and the Peace Education Resources Centre continues to be extensively supported.

The National Christian Council of Sri Lanka issued an invitation to Mr. Richardson to make a return visit to Sri Lanka to help in the development of programmes of Peace Education, which he did in May.

### **Submission to Initiative '92**

Initiative '92 is a voluntary initiative by a group of Northern Ireland people to promote thinking about the future of Northern Ireland. A submission was made drawing attention to the conclusions of a number of inter-church reports

### **Loyalist Paramilitaries**

The study document on this topic produced by the Working Party of the Board was circulated to the Member Churches, to relevant clergy and individuals. It was published in a number of Church periodicals.

### **Pastoral Care for Members of the Security Forces**

Meetings took place with the RUC and the Chaplain General of the British Army. In the light of their comments the proposals of the Working Party were revised and circulated to the Member Churches for their approval. Work continues on this issue.

### **Environmental Issues**

A resources sheet and the 'What the Bible Says About the Environment' booklet were circulated to clergy in the Member Churches in September.

### **Brook Clinic**

The discussion paper produced by the Working Party of the Board to explore the issues underlying the setting up of a Brook Clinic to provide contraceptive advice to young people in Belfast was circulated to the Member Churches. It was published in a number of Church periodicals.

### **Irish Neutrality**

A discussion paper was produced on this topic following the resolution at the 1990 Annual Meeting. It was circulated to the Member Churches. (See Appendix I).

## **INTER CHURCH AFFAIRS**

(A report on the Irish Inter-Church Meeting appears at the end of this Report).

### **Officers**

The Rev. D. S. G. Godfrey who was Deputy Moderator has become Moderator in succession to the Rev. D. J. Kerr and the Rev. D. Nesbitt has become Deputy Moderator.

### **Women's Church Organisations**

The Annual Fellowship Day was held in May in Newry and Sister Lavinia Byrne of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland was the speaker. Mrs. Sally Ayling was appointed President in succession to Mrs. Muriel Gallagher. The name of the Committee is being changed to ICC Women's Link.

### **Women's Desk**

A Women's Desk based in the Inter-Church Centre has been set up, staffed voluntarily two mornings a week. It began on September 1 and was opened by Mrs. Christine Eames on September 30.



## **Decade of Solidarity with Women**

A discussion paper on the place accorded to women in church and society was prepared by the Rev. D. S. G. Godfrey. It was circulated to Council members. As a follow-up to the paper, Sister Lavinia Byrne spoke to the Autumn Gathering of the Council. Consideration of this issue is on-going.

## **Child in the Church Group**

The Group is currently studying the Church of England Report 'All God's Children' with special reference to children outside the Church structures. A Home Office document 'A Code of Practice for Safeguarding the Welfare of Children in Voluntary Organisations' is being looked at for its implications for Sunday Schools. This document arises out of the Children Act which is now law on the UK mainland and is likely to become law in Northern Ireland in the near future. Mr. O. McAuley has succeeded Mrs. Ruth Murray (née White) as Secretary.

The Group continues to provide a useful forum for the exchange of views between the members about children's ministry and training ideas for voluntary teachers and leaders who work with children in the Churches.

## **Youth Committee**

The Youth Committee continued to review its role during 1992. As a result of this review and further unavoidable changes in membership, activities were somewhat limited. There was involvement in the General Committee Meeting of the Ecumenical Youth Council of Europe, held at Corrymeela in February. Participation in a variety of other E.Y.C.E. events was also facilitated.

Planning work for an all-Ireland inter-church youth weekend, to be held in Spring 1993 and development work continued on the Committee's "Youth Encounter" scheme. An exchange of information continued with Youth Link N.I., the inter-church youth work agency recently established by the four larger Churches in Northern Ireland. With the appointment of full time staff, Youth Link's work is expanding, and the Youth Committee is keen, within its own very limited range of activities, to complement rather than duplicate the work of its partner agency. A concern remains to develop a programme of inter-church youth activities which will involve young people from throughout Ireland, North and South, and from a wide variety of church backgrounds. In this regard, it is hoped that the review of the Youth Committee's role can be concluded in 1993 and proposals for ways forward in partnership implemented.

## **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

The joint ICC/RC Committee produced a thirteenth Irish Order of Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It was felt that the eight page

## **'Vision and Reality: A Survey of Twentieth Century Irish Inter-Church Relations'**

The Rev. Dr. I. M. Ellis, a member of the Council, published in December a very useful survey with the above title, of inter-church relations in Ireland in the 20th century. It is a complement to **Christians in Ulster** by the Rev. Dr. R. D. E. Gallagher and the late Dr. A. S. Worrall (Oxford University Press, 1982). Dr. Ellis's book is published by the Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University, Belfast, price £6.75stg.

### **The Rev. R. D. E. Gallagher, C.B.E.**

The Rev. Dr. R. D. E. Gallagher will be retiring as Honorary Secretary of the Board as from the Annual Meeting. He has given devoted service to the Board, to the Council and to the ecumenical movement in Ireland over many years. The General Secretary will be taking over the servicing of the Board.

## **OVERSEAS AFFAIRS**

### **World Mission Committee**

The Committee has looked at the proposal from the Rev. Victor Ryan of Stranmillis College, Belfast to set up an Inter-Faith Forum in Northern Ireland. The Rev. S. L. Wallace represented the Committee at the Roman Catholic Irish Missionary Union General Meeting at Navan in May. An ecumenical Study Day is currently being planned.

### **The Churches' Commission on Mission**

Mrs. Helen Lidgett, Education Secretary of CCOM, visited Ireland in January to learn what was being done in the field of education for mission. A full programme was arranged, both North and South.

The Rev. S. J. Campbell attended the second meeting of the Churches' Commission in Scotland in September. The theme was 'Europe: The Sixth Continent of Mission'.

### **The Irish Churches in Europe**

Pastor P.G. Fritz produced a paper on this theme during the year which was discussed by the Board and circulated to the Member Churches. (See Appendix II). During the year the Churches in Ireland have been showing an increasing interest in the European dimension to Irish affairs.

### **Former Yugoslavia**

The last General Secretary, the Rt. Hon. D. W. Bleakley, visited the former state of Yugoslavia as part of an international Church delegation. The Rt. Rev. John Neill, Bishop of Tuam, also visited that country in January as part of a Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland delegation.

## **Ireland/Middle East/South Africa - the Role of Religion**

The report of the Consultation held in 1990 on 'Religion in Situations of Conflict: Its Uses and Misuses' was published during the year. It is available from the Inter-Church Centre, price £Stg.6.

## **Follow-up to Irish Churches' Delegation Visit to Israel and Palestine**

An Israel-Palestine Road Show was put on in Bangor and South Belfast. The Rev. Dr. R. J. G. Gray's audio visual, based on the visit, won a major award. It is available for showing on request.

## **Palestine/Israel**

A Resolution on the 400 Palestinians deported by the Government of Israel was passed by the Board.

## **Sudan**

The situation in the Sudan received attention during the year and the Board will be represented on a Sudan Support Group in Northern Ireland.

## **Situation in Sierra Leone**

A lunch was arranged in November for the Rev. Christian Peacock and the Rev. Francis Nabieu of the Methodist Church in Sierra Leone to speak about the situation in that country which has been of concern to the Board.

## **Sri Lanka**

Mr. N. L. Richardson visited Sri Lanka to help in the organisation of a programme of peace and education there. His visit was sponsored by the National Christian Council in Sri Lanka, the Methodist Church and the Religious Society of Friends.

## **Overseas Aid**

The following Resolutions were passed at the Autumn Gathering:

To the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom: "The ICC is horrified at the proposed cuts in the Government's budget for the Overseas Development Administration, in the face of hugh non-government generosity, and calls upon your Government to, at least, maintain its overseas development aid at its current level."

To the Taoiseach of the Irish Republic: "The ICC encourages the Government of the Republic of Ireland to raise its overseas development aid from its current low level, recognising the strong Government lobby in the European Community and the co-funding of Irish personnel through the agency for Personnel Service Overseas. The ICC was particularly moved by all that President Robinson achieved in her recent visits to Somalia and America."

## **CCBI International Liaison Group**

The Moderator of the Board is a member of this Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland Group.

## **Board Priorities**

It was agreed to concentrate the Board's efforts on a number of overseas areas - Palestine/Israel, former USSR, Sri Lanka, West Africa.

## **CHRISTIAN AID IRELAND**

The most up to date annual figures are for the year ending March 1992. Financially this was a good year for Christian Aid. The totals raised in Ireland were £882,515 plus IR£318,521. Behind these figures lies a great deal of hard work and generosity and much commitment to the poor of the world on the part of supporters and sponsoring Churches.

Christian Aid week 1991 showed a massive increase of over 50% compared with the previous year raising £365,146 in Northern Ireland. In spite of fears 1992's total was £322,804, still 36% ahead of 1990. Disaster appeals especially for Africa are again a sad feature of 1992, and have brought in large amounts of money. Since September 1992 £270,000 plus IR£162,000 have been given for Africa. Special thanks are due to the Churches which, either centrally or through congregations responding directly to Christian Aid, have greatly swelled the total.

However it is important that current disasters do not distract us from underlying causes of poverty. Development projects are still essential tools in strengthening poor people and communities as they tackle their own poverty. Funds for these come from denominations, Christian Aid Week, personal donations and covenants, Third World funds, Irish government grants and many other sources. A new venture in 1992 was the party of ten Irish supporters who visited projects in South India and who have returned filled with enthusiasm for what they have seen. These people are now available to share their experience with Church and other groups and it is hoped they will be widely used.

It is also important that western nations tackle the root causes of poverty. For some years Christian Aid concentrated on the issues of world debt. In September 1992 the "Trade Campaign" was launched by Cissy Kwoba Abungu from Uganda. The aim is to influence the way trade is run so that it does less harm to the poor. Many people have expressed an interest and have signed up on the special mailing list of names of people who wish to be kept informed and who are prepared to take action such as writing letters to governments or others. Cafe Direct, a fairly traded coffee is being promoted to supermarkets and retail outlets here. Efforts are being made to encourage Churches to get involved in this effort.

Christian Aid depends on the support of the Churches which sponsor it, and on a loyal band of people who give generously, organise special efforts, organise or collect in Christian Aid Week, encourage others to get involved or help in any other way. Deep thanks are expressed to all these. Of special interest may be the donations received from President Mary Robinson from funds at her disposal. She has indicated her appreciation of the information supplied to her by the Bishop of Cork and the National Secretary before her visit to Somalia, and part of the profits of her book will come to Christian Aid.

The Irish Committee, composed mainly of representatives appointed by sponsoring Churches, has clarified its role and hopes to start looking in more detail at subjects of concern, such as how Christian Aid can best relate to the Churches. Mrs. Carrie Barkley represents ICC. Three Irish people serve on the Christian Aid Board (Rev. Dr. Dick Gordon who is nominated by ICC; Rt. Rev. Dr. Roy Warke, Bishop of Cork and Mrs. Gillian Kingston who are appointed by the sponsoring Churches). where they make a most useful and appreciated contribution.

Mrs. Georgina Hoey has retired after 15 years service in the Belfast Office and her place has been taken by Miss Anne Buchanan. Mrs. Liz Hoey is also now on the payroll of the Belfast office in a part time capacity. Ms. Maureen Eastwood, Area Secretary for the Republic, was seconded for 6 months to Sri Lanka and in her absence the work in the Republic has been undertaken by Ms. Mary Purcell and Mrs. Bet Aalen. Mrs. Margaret Boden continues to work as Area Secretary for Northern Ireland and Rev. Ian McDowell as National Secretary. All have been extremely busy with a multitude of activities which cannot all be reported here.

## **COUNCIL OF CHURCHES FOR BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

The Rev. John Reardon, General Secretary of CCBI, was present at the Autumn Gathering. A number of other staff members visited Ireland during the year. The ICC has been seeking to determine what activities of CCBI it is appropriate and possible to be involved in.

## **EUROPEAN ECUMENICAL COMMISSION FOR CHURCH AND SOCIETY**

The Rev. S. Hutchinson has been appointed to attend the Annual Meeting of the Commission for the next two years.

## **CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES**

The former General Secretary of the Council, the Rt. Hon. D. W. Bleakley, was present at the CEC Assembly in Prague in September. The Rev. P. Colton, a member of the Council, was appointed to the Central Committee of the Conference.

## **IRISH INTER-CHURCH MEETING**

An Irish Inter-Church Meeting was held on May 8th with the theme 'Irish Churches in a New Europe'. The two speakers were Dr. Dennis Kennedy and the Rev. Noel Treanor. The next Irish Inter-Church Meeting will be a residential, for the first time, and take place on October 8-9, 1993. It will deal with the subject of Sectarianism.

### **Irish Inter-Church Committee**

The Irish Inter-Church Committee met five times during the year. The video on inter-church cooperation 'Together in Christ?' was launched in October. It was produced by Veritas Video with an inter-church committee providing guidance. Copies are available from the Peace Education Resources Centre, price £19.95stg.

There has been a significant change in the servicing of the Meeting, the Committee and its Departments. Sister Roisin Hannaway was appointed part-time Administrative Officer from September 1 with responsibility for servicing the work of the Meeting. The Rt. Rev. Mgr. M. Ledwith and the Rt. Hon. D. W. Bleakley were replaced by the Rev. Dr. T. Norris and Dr. R. D. Stevens as Joint Secretaries. Sister Roisin is based in the Inter-Church Centre and can be contacted there on Thursday afternoons.

Following the ending of the British Council of Churches/Irish Council of Churches Consultation Group in 1990, a meeting of representatives of British and Irish Churches will take place in February with a primary focus on the Northern Ireland situation.

### **Department of Social Issues**

The Working Party on Sectarianism, co-chaired by Mrs. Mary McAleese and Mr. John Lampen, completed its work early in the New Year. Its report will be discussed at the next Irish Inter-Church Meeting.

Mrs. Olive Marshall resigned as co-Chairman during the year and was replaced by the Rev. Dr. I. M. Ellis. The other co-Chairman is Miss Pauline Berwick. The Department is currently looking at its future work and role and will be holding a residential in February.

### **Department of Theological Questions**

Work on the various understandings of Salvation and Grace and on Ecumenical Principles is planned to be published early in the New Year.

The Department is carrying out a review of priorities and a residential conference was held at the end of November. As a result it has been agreed to undertake a major study on 'Freedom, Justice and Responsibility in Ireland'.

## APPENDIX I

### IRISH NEUTRALITY

#### Background

Irish neutrality - its position of non-involvement in military alliances - was originally, and continued for a long time to be, a function of Anglo-Irish relations, having to do essentially with the continuing partition of Ireland. However, Jerome Connolly of the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace comments:

‘It does no harm to admit that Irish neutrality is now a different animal from that of thirty or fifty years ago. It enjoys a public support which appears to reflect a generalised desire to keep Ireland free of international military entanglements and commitments other than those resulting from UN membership. In the minds of perhaps a majority of the population, Irish neutrality has acquired a symbolic importance which should not be lightly disparaged, reflecting as it does important values’. (in J. Connolly, **Riding the Tiger: Ireland, European Security and Defence, An Examination of the Issues in the Light of Maastricht and Beyond**, Irish Commission for Justice and Peace, 1992, p.11).

These values will be discussed later in the paper.

#### Changes which are Affecting Irish Neutrality

##### 1. The Wider International Context

Over the last three years we have seen an end to the Cold War and with it the threat of confrontation between East and West. The Taoiseach, Mr. Albert Reynolds, said in May 1992: ‘The world of mutually antagonistic alliances, which gave neutrality its relevance, has gone.’

A Hungarian commentator has commented: ‘Neutrality is only imaginable as a status between two hostile powers; with the collapse of the Soviet power and the ‘end of the Cold War’ the potential for neutrality also decreased.’ (in Connolly, op.cit. p.11).

So in the changing international scene after the Cold War, the question arises: ‘What does neutrality actually mean now?’

The new international situation brings new opportunities, risks and uncertainties. There are dangers of large-scale ethnic violence, as has happened in the former State of Yugoslavia; there is resurgent nationalism in a lot of places; there are massive economic problems in many countries which could cause instability and unrest; and there are significant tensions over minorities in many states. It will be difficult to remain aloof from the consequences of these difficulties, as the pressures to intervene militarily in the former State of Yugoslavia show.

## 2. The European Community Context

The European Community used to be simply an economic club, but gradually there has been a move to coordinate foreign policy. The Maastricht Treaty represents a further evolution in this direction. It makes provision for a common foreign policy to include security and envisages the possibility of common defence policies and structures. This will be done through the Western European Union (WEU) which will be an 'integral part' of the new European Union.

The WEU which is under the operational control of NATO includes all EC States, except Ireland, Denmark and Greece. It is the European pillar of NATO. France and Germany believe that the status given to the WEU in the Treaty opens the way for it to become the defence arm of the EC.

The Maastricht Treaty effectively postpones discussion on the longterm future of the WEU until 1996 when the Maastricht Treaty is due to be reviewed. This will also be the time when discussion will be due to start on redefining the role of the WEU. The Irish Government has recently applied for permanent observer status of the WEU.

It is impossible to tell at this point of time whether the WEU will become the defence arm of the EC. Much will depend on the future role of NATO in Europe and the impact which the entry of neutral countries, such as Sweden and Austria, will have on the Community.

The advantage for Ireland in other neutral countries joining the EC is that it will create a stronger 'neutral' voice within it. This may make it more difficult to create a common defence policy or it may mean that some of the values associated with neutrality are carried into new European security and defence arrangements. It may, however, be that the present neutral countries will have to abandon their neutrality to a significant degree. For instance, the European Commission is demanding that Sweden, which has applied to join the Community, should agree to join an eventual Common European defence as a price of membership.

It is, however, very unclear what sort of military power, if any, the EC is going to be. Even more uncertain is whether there will be an EC nuclear deterrent, and what the implications of this are, politically and morally. As has been said earlier, the international context is a rapidly changing one at present and it is not clear what threats the European Community will be facing in the future, and what an appropriate European defence response might be.

Uncertainties about the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, whether it will be modified, etc., add to the difficulties of the discussion at this point in time. However, if ratified, the Maastricht Treaty certainly chips away at the traditional concept of Irish neutrality and this appears to be the view of the present Irish Government. The evolution of the EC acutely raises the



issues: How is it possible to hold on to the principle of non-involvement in military alliances with a proper sense of responsibility to partners in a common enterprise? And how are these two balanced?

### **The Values Associated with Neutrality**

Professor Patrick Keatinge identifies five major political values which underline Irish neutrality (in an Institute of European Affairs' study of political union (1991) ):

First of all there is the value of **independence of decision**. It encompasses the view that 'the exclusive power to use force is the basis of national sovereignty', and is often accompanied by the proposition that small states can only suffer from entanglement in great power wars'.

Secondly, there is the value of **minimal resort to force**. Neutrality is not pacifism, 'but the political culture of neutrality at the very least emphasises a strict interpretation of the principle of proportionality in the use of force'. This has two corollaries: rejection of nuclear deterrence and a 'distaste for the projection of the use of force outside the territory to be defended. For a small state with a colonial past such a policy suggests a form of neo-imperialism'.

Thirdly, there is the value of **credibility as 'peacemaker'**, in which the neutral 'is often seen as an international mediator, being able to provide 'good offices' for contacts between disputants'. Fourthly, there is **credibility as 'peacemaker'** in the UN and fifthly, credibility as 'Third World Developer'.

Ireland has traditionally been a strong supporter of nuclear disarmament, Third World development and the concept of 'collective security' as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations rather than the concept of 'peace' as secured by 'confrontational' military alliances. The newest of these collective mechanisms is the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) which involves practically all the European countries and the US and Canada. It is the forum in which the 'Helsinki Process' of dialogue and discussion on security matters in Europe is conducted. Ireland and the other European neutrals have placed great emphasis on enhancing the CSCE. The CSCE mechanism is an evolving one and it is not clear how important it will become, or whether it might complement or support a common EC defence policy.

Clearly, some of the 'political' values mentioned above have a strong moral dimension. There are values here which many Christians would support.

But neutrality is not an end in itself. Jerome Connolly, comments:

"Each country has the right and the duty of legitimate defence, the right to defend the integrity of its territory and to resist unjustified aggression against itself; equally it has the duty to cooperate with other

states for the common good, to promote international order and so on. Viewed against these claims, neutrality is not a fundamental moral principal in itself and cannot be defended as such. It must be assessed in the light of other values and in relation to particular situations. It is a means to an end rather than an end in itself'. (in Connolly, *op.cit.*p.72)

## **Conclusion**

The international situation is rapidly evolving. The period 1993-96 will be a particularly crucial one. Ireland and its traditional policy of neutrality cannot remain unaffected. Hard political choices (which have moral dimensions) will require to be taken. Can the traditional policy be retained in its essentials or will Irish neutrality require to be developed or perhaps transcended in a new European context? Decisions are probably some time off. In the meantime, a debate on 'What does Irish neutrality actually mean now?' 'Does it have continuing validity?' needs urgently to get underway. This is a debate to which the Churches can contribute. There may be something to learn from the experiences of the Churches in other neutral European countries, e.g. Switzerland and Sweden.

## APPENDIX II

### **The Irish Churches in 1992 - Introductory Remarks on the Role of the Protestant Churches in the New Europe**

by Pastor Paul G. Fritz, Dublin

#### **1. Facts**

A mere glance at the pie-charts reveals the statistical significance - or rather insignificance - of the Protestant Churches and suggests that these Churches (let alone the Irish Protestant Churches) might have a very restricted influence on the emerging New Europe. Apart from Scandinavia, Great Britain and Germany these Churches are, in overall terms, **minority** Churches with very different historical, social and ecumenical backgrounds. How then can we hope to bring our 'Protestant' spiritual and social convictions - conditioned by such diverse traditions - to bear on the process of developing a new shape of Europe?

#### **2. Analysis of present trends in Europe**

The pace and intensity of change are dictated by Eastern European countries. In all these countries 'Freedom' expelled dictatorship. However, the victory of freedom does not yet constitute the victory of democracy; and this is so for well known economic, political and social reasons. The unexpected changes have generated a general sense of precariousness in Eastern **and** Western Europe. The dilemma of post-Communist Eastern European societies is the uncertainty about the direction of their political development: **either** towards a united Europe ("The Common House") **or** striving to establish each country's own modern (late-twentieth century) national identity? We are here dealing with two conflicting political cultures, also between East and West, since the problems of nationalism and identity parallel each other but they are by no means identical. The processes of enlightenment, secularisation and democratisation were suspended in Eastern Europe for much longer than in the West. In Eastern Europe the Churches now often appear in the shining armour of defenders of traditional values of nationalism.

#### **3. Analysis of present trends in Protestant Churches**

Deficits: Protestant worship often fails to express the wholeness of salvation; mostly a purely cognitive matter

Provincialism and self-centeredness

a critical voice without involvement in political matters (as distinct from narrow party-politics); political involvement is all too often left to Roman Catholic or charismatic initiatives

Chances: To offer for general application the educational insights (in theory and practice) of non-authoritarian methods  
stressing personal responsibility and initiative  
informed critical distance vis-a-vis all forms of political and economic power positions and vested interests  
ability to develop reconciled diversity rather than centralised bureaucratic unity

#### 4. Possibilities for a Protestant contribution to the New Europe

Despite the fact that Protestant Churches are statistically insignificant in their minority position, they will, it is hoped pool their efforts to act upon developments as a **relevant** minority:.

- the New Europe must not be allowed to become a merely market-propelled entity. Protestant Churches must carefully scrutinize the Single Market at the end of this year as well as the European Political Union and the European Monetary Union (Maastricht). The Churches will have to insist on and show the way to bring about a synthesis of political realism and a caring morality.
- Protestants must never forget that it was the very clash of Reformation with Counter-Reformation that ultimately, after acrimonious persecutions, learned to recognise tolerance as the life-saving force which must be substituted for the uncritical acceptance of clerical infallibility; freedom of religious worship and freedom of conscience as we postulate them now were intellectual achievements of the Reformation/Counter-Reformation era. These insights have to be upheld against all attempts to transform the modern secular state into a so-called 'Christian' or in religious terms ideological state.
- religious pluralism is a vital part of multi-cultural pluralist societies. Thus the insights of the reformers must be revitalised according to the Protestant theological correlation of **libertas** and **caritas**.
- despite many similarities between countries the New Europe will have to respect different cultures and religious traditions and also show solidarity with **all** the peoples of Europe, especially those disadvantaged politically, economically, socially or in matters of religion and the environment.
- Protestant Churches must insist that the East-West conflict which now appears to have been so unexpectedly resolved is not replaced by a North-South conflict; Protestant churches must urge governments and the new European agencies to take their commitment to the 'Two-Thirds World' utterly seriously in intellectual as well as practical terms making it clear to governments that mere lip-service cannot impress.

## 5. Possible strategies for the Churches in this situation

The most important challenge for the Churches in this situation of economic, political and cultural changes in Europe is their function in the society of the future and their role in the European process of integration. There appear to be three options open to the Protestant Churches:

- a. **Ghetto strategy:** to retreat into a ghetto mentality in the face of post-Christian indifference, sects, other world religions; to avoid confrontation. The result would be the abdication of duty as Christians in a multi-cultural society and as such an opting-out; or the struggle of one ghetto against others.
- b. **Offensive strategy:** either Europe becomes the battlefield of various religions, or religion is made the bulwark against enlightenment and secularisation. They both are held responsible for the loss of 'Christian roots' or 'Christian identity' of the European peoples. This seems to be the strategy developed from the Roman-Catholic concept of 'Re-evangelisation' or the Second Evangelisation of Europe, as Pope John Paul II enunciated it in his 'Dream of Compostella' in 1982. Such a concept, however, obviously seeks to turn the clock back to the period before the Reformation, anachronistically overlooking such positive modern developments as for instance Human Rights. This Roman-Catholic dream of a 'Europe of the Cathedrals' has its roots in a new clerical imperialistic and triumphalist thinking, denying the role and office of the modern democratic state.

A truly Protestant 'offensive strategy' must protest Europe's vocation to freedom and unity in plurality (in theological terms: 'reconciled diversity' as proposed by the Lutheran World Federation).

- c. **The strategy of dialogue:** neither the confessional split of Europe since the Reformation nor the process of secularisation can be undone - nor should anyone wish to turn the clock back: historical development since then has resulted in too many benefits which must be cherished by the Christian Churches. All this constitutes our heritage which can be made to bear fruit in the New Europe. Is it not the height of arrogance to claim that the roots of European identity are exclusively Christian values? Islam and Judaism contributed substantially to this identity among many other forces.

## 6. Conclusion

Aware of the statistical facts, we must ensure that religious or confessional differences are not exacerbated. If there is one significant contribution which the Protestant Churches can make to the shaping of the New Europe it is the elaboration of a new spirit of ecumenism - not as an inner-Protestant enterprise but as a wider Christian ecumenism. This means that while Churches accept a valid mandate to make political pronouncements and

suggestions, they refrain from becoming politicised as Churches. There is much scope for a political voice of the Churches in the socio-economic sphere of European union. The open question is: are the Protestant Churches willing to co-operate institutionally and structurally in the shaping of the New Europe, as example of their common ministry as partners of other agencies in state and society? Certainly this could be a way to overcome the self-centeredness and introvertedness of our Churches which has kept them so preoccupied with themselves for so long.

It is our task to make these issues live issues in our local Churches. The limited right of connecting nation and confession simultaneously by a blessing and a curse, must not sidetrack from the more generous interpretation of the concept of shared Christian identity. If we do not learn this lesson in Ireland as well as in Serbia and Croatia, then the common Christian entity of **all** Churches will certainly suffer. We are called to tackle the task as outlined in section 4 of this paper; and I personally am convinced that we have to opt for the strategy of dialogue to stand a chance of making a worthwhile contribution.

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