

1996

Annual Report of the Irish Council of Churches

Submitted to the Annual Meeting
of the Council
March 1996



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Introduction from the General Secretary

Nearly eighteen months after the loyalist and republican cessations of violence there is little doubt that the people of Northern Ireland have warmed to life without the constant threat of violence. There is an enormous sense of release - of a weight having been lifted. But it is equally clear that real peace is yet to come. We are in an uncertain zone between peace and a return to violence.

Lasting peace requires much more than the silence of the guns and bombs. It needs people to act in new ways towards those in the other community. It means making political agreements to live together and to respect each other's traditions, cultures and aspirations. It means breaking free from the past.

We are becoming conscious how difficult it is to work for, and establish, the things that make for peace. Some of the difficulties in the building of real peace are the following:

- there is a sober awareness that we could return to violence and that the opportunity given to us by the ceasefires could be lost
- there is a lack of belief among many that the paramilitaries are serious about a permanent end of violence
- there are some who simply need their enemies too much and don't want to change
- there are the hurts and pains of those who have been victims of violence
- there are serious difficulties over the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons
- there are continuing political uncertainties and insecurities about the future
- there is a deep-seated lack of trust between many of the main parties in the conflict
- there is an unpreparedness among many to face the costs of change

The ceasefires have provided a breathing space and an opportunity but, in themselves, they are not enough. We have to move forward. Otherwise we may slip back into violence. And, at the same time, we are starting to grasp how difficult and complex the construction of a political settlement will be. It will be a long walk to peace. Hope, patience, endurance and creativity will be required, and these are Christian virtues. The details of a political settlement are for politicians. Nevertheless how, under God, we are to live together in Northern Ireland is not just a question for politicians. Churches have a role in helping to create an atmosphere in which

politicians may be able to make the compromises necessary for a settlement. They also have a role in preparing and helping people to change.

Both the Council and the Irish Inter-Church Meeting have looked at the particular contribution of the churches to peacemaking during the year. A meeting of those people in the member churches concerned with peace and political development was held to share information and insights. A further meeting is to be held in March when the issue of marches and processions will be under discussion.

The visit of a joint delegation from the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Council of European Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference (CCEE) in November to learn, inter alia, about reconciliation and ecumenical activity showed that Ireland has a considerable amount to contribute internationally in these areas. The last twenty-five years have not all been wasted and it is hoped that there can be a significant Irish input into the Second European Ecumenical Encounter to be held on the theme of reconciliation in June 1997.

The Churches' Peace Education Programme has continued to produce new materials for schools. Two new modules in the Pathways series for primary schools have been printed. The Programme is seeking to move beyond the development of materials for schools to a more active involvement in bringing schools together on a North/South basis.

The issue of sectarianism remains on the church agenda. The Irish Inter-Church Meeting in November heard about the responses to 'Sectarianism: A Discussion Document'. The Churches' Peace Education Programme is producing a module on the subject for secondary schools. The Irish School of Ecumenism's project 'Moving Beyond Sectarianism' is based in the Inter-Church Centre. In developing the project its staff are learning that facing the difficult issues which hurt and divide is not easy.

In February 1995 a weekend for local inter-church groups took place. The weekend enabled many of the different religious traditions in Ireland to share with each other. The weekend pointed up the contribution that congregations and parishes could make to the development of better relationships in local communities. Better relationships between churches have social consequences. Developing activities that promote mutual understanding and cooperation on social and community issues is a practical contribution that churches can make to the building of peace at this time.

Mr. Maurice Kinkead commenced work as Development Officer for the Belfast Churches' Urban Development Committee at the beginning of April. The Committee operates in association with the Council and is seeking to promote the social and community outreach of local churches, particularly in areas of deprivation. Some research which Mr. Kinkead has carried out for the Committee in order to establish its future directions has shown the very significant contribution the churches continue to make in

urban society, particularly in youth work, work with the elderly and with parents and young children (see Appendix). While society is becoming more secular churches should not underestimate the contribution they make.

The single biggest issue facing the Council internally is that of its future. The decisions which the Council and its Member Churches must make are a consequence of the new relationships that have developed between the Member Churches and the Roman Catholic Church since the early 1970s - often as the result of initiatives taken by the Council. These developments have not been without controversy or difficulty, but, nevertheless, we are in a new situation today. The basic question facing the Council is: is it necessary to wither in order for new or other inter-church bodies to flourish? We cannot stay where we are - in that situation as a Council we mirror where Northern Ireland finds itself as a community.

Meetings

The Annual Meeting was held in March in the Church of Ireland Theological College, Dublin. The evening session looked at 'The Responsibilities of and Challenges to the Churches created by the IRA and Loyalist Ceasefires'. The speakers were the Rt. Rev. S. G. Poyntz, the Rev. S. Hutchinson and the Rev. M. Hurley, S.J. It was also an opportunity to say goodbye to Bishop Poyntz, who was retiring from the Council after forty years' service.

The Autumn Gathering was held in Belfast when Mr. David Porter of the Evangelical Contribution on Northern Ireland (ECONI) spoke on the organisation's work. Constitutional changes were also agreed at this meeting and at a special meeting in November.

Staffing

Mr. Harold Calvert retired as Honorary Secretary of the Board of Overseas Affairs at the Autumn Gathering. We would like to thank Harold for his conscientious and painstaking commitment to the work of the Board during his ten years' service. He was replaced as Secretary by Mr. Rob Fairmichael.

The Role, Structure and Future of the Council

The Board of Community Affairs was stood down as from the Annual Meeting; there is now only one inter-church social affairs body - the Department of Social Issues of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting. Following the standing down of the Board, the remaining Boards of Inter-Church Affairs and Overseas Affairs were reconstituted.

During the year the process of appointment to the Executive Committee was changed whereby Member Churches now make the appointments. This required a change to the Constitution which was agreed at Council Meetings in October and November. The process of election of the President, Vice President, Moderators and Deputy Moderators was also clarified by constitutional change during the year.

At the Executive Committee meeting in November it was agreed to set up a sub-committee to look at the future of the Council and to bring proposals. These proposals were considered at the February meeting of the Executive Committee and a way forward agreed.

Inter-Church Centre

The Inter-Church Centre Company Ltd. has gifted the building to the Council. Following the passing of necessary resolutions at the Annual Meeting, the Deed of Trust was signed. The Deed of Trust was then executed with the Ulster Bank Ltd. who are acting as the holding trustees for the Council. Managing Trustees are responsible for the day-to-day running of the property. These are the President, Vice President, General Secretary and immediate past President. The winding up of the Company and having it struck off the Register of Companies is in process.

Rental agreements with tenants have been drawn up and signed. Maintenance work to the building was completed during the year. A regular inspection of the property has been instituted.

COMMUNITY ISSUES

The UK Lottery

Following expressions of concern about the effect of the UK Lottery at the Executive Committee the General Secretary attended a meeting of Social Responsibility representatives of Churches in Britain and Ireland in October. A statement was drawn up which received substantial publicity in the media.

Sunday Trading Legislation

The President and the General Secretary attended meetings convened by the Northern Ireland Evangelical Alliance to discuss prospective changes in the legislation in Northern Ireland governing Sunday trading. The Church Leaders of the four larger Churches were encouraged to make a statement on the issue and to make representations to Government, both North and South.

Peace and Political Developments

A meeting of those people in the Member Churches concerned with peace and political developments was convened in November to share information and insights. A further meeting is to be held in March when the issue of marches and processions will be under discussion.

The General Secretary sent a letter to ecumenical partners abroad, etc. on the situation in the Northern Ireland community one year after the Loyalist and IRA ceasefires.

Review of Fair Employment Legislation in Northern Ireland

A submission was made to the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights concerning its review of Fair Employment legislation in Northern Ireland.

Irish Churches' Committee for Television and Radio Affairs

The Salvation Army was invited to nominate someone to the Committee and Captain S. Symonds was appointed.

INTER-CHURCH AFFAIRS BOARD

Women's Link

The Annual Fellowship Day was held in Cork in April with seventy participants. Mrs. Maureen Irwin has become President in succession to Mrs. Sally Ayling and Mrs. Elizabeth Parkin has become Secretary in succession to Mrs. Hilary Sloan.

The Women's Desk has continued to operate in the Inter-Church Centre with books and other materials being added.

Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity With Women

An ecumenical team Visit to Ireland took place from February 9-12 1996. The visit was one of a number of visits that have been taking place throughout the world as part of a process of marking the middle of the Decade. The team met a number of church and women's groups in both Belfast and Dublin.

The Child in the Church Group

A regional launch was held in May in Belfast of the report 'Unfinished Business - Children and the Churches' which had been prepared by a working party appointed by the Consultative Group on Ministry among Children. The President of the Council and other church leaders were presented with copies. A consultation was organised in November to discuss the report.

Guidelines on child care and protection were drafted and circulated to member churches for adaption to the individual church's structure. The recent resource kit published by the D.H.S.S. 'Our Duty to Care - principles of good practice for the protection of children' underscores the thrust of the guidelines drafted by the group and should be considered seriously by member churches.

Mr. Oswald Macauley of the Presbyterian Church who acted as Honorary Secretary of the group has taken up a congregational appointment. His services were exemplary and his contribution greatly appreciated.

Leuenberg Agreement

The Rev. Professor J. C. McCullough spoke at the Autumn Meeting of the Board about the Leuenberg Agreement between Lutheran and Reformed Churches.

Evangelism

Following consultation with the Member Churches it has been agreed to set up an Annual Evangelism Forum which would share experiences and resources. The first meeting took place in February, 1996.

The Moderator of the Board, the Rev. Canon David Godfrey, continues to represent the Council on the Four Nations Forum on Evangelisation. The next meeting of the Forum will take place in Ireland in March and members of the Forum will be involved in the Council's Annual Meeting.

The idea of an Irish project to promote the use of the Bible, similar to the 'Open Book' proposal in England, was referred to the Irish Inter-Church Committee for its consideration.

Contact With other Churches

Contact was made during the year with the Coptic and Greek Orthodox Churches who have Churches in the Dublin area. The Greek Orthodox Church has applied for membership of the Council and this will be considered at the Annual Meeting. It was agreed to invite the Coptic Orthodox Church to send an observer to Council Meetings.

Role and Purpose of the Board

The role and purpose of the Board is under discussion.

OVERSEAS BOARD

Moderatorship and Secretaryship

The Deputy Moderator, Mrs. Muriel Gallagher, was acting Moderator until the autumn when the Rev. Victor Launder was appointed. Mr. Rob Fairmichael took over the servicing of the Board at the autumn meeting from Mr. Harold Calvert.

World Mission Committee

A Study Day was held in May at the Dromantine Conference Centre, Newry, when the Rev. Jerome Munyangau from Tanzania and the Rev. Dr. Ian Hart, a former Presbyterian missionary, were the speakers and the theme was 'Whither Mission and the Missionary Society?'.

The Churches' Commission on Mission

The Rev. Canon David Godfrey and the Rev. Paul Kingston represented the Council at the Commission's fifth meeting which was held in Dublin in September on the theme 'Engaging the Vision'. The Rev. Paul Kingston was appointed to the Standing Committee of CCOM.

Nuclear Testing in the Pacific

A letter of support was sent to the Evangelical Church of French Polynesia.

WCC Gospel and Culture Study Project

Some extracts from the report 'Sectarianism: A Discussion Document', which had relevance in a wider context, were submitted.

Visitors

A meeting was arranged with the Rev. Duleep de Chickera of Sri Lanka who has a special ministry in peace and reconciliation in that country.

The Rev. Nigel Dunne, Chairman of the Dublin University Far Eastern Mission, Mr. Peter McDowell and the Rev. Keith Clements, International Affairs Secretary of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, spoke at Board meetings during the year.

CCBI International Affairs Liaison Group

The Moderator replaced the Rev. Dr. Gordon Gray, former Moderator, on the Group at the end of the year.

Exchange of Information

One of the functions of the Board is to provide a forum for an exchange of information on various international situations and issues of church interest. During the year areas covered have included West Africa, Palestine, Nepal, the former Yugoslavia and the arms trade.

Christian Aid

This year which included the celebrations of Christian Aid's fiftieth birthday has been extremely busy. The birthday was celebrated with a major conference in Dublin which had as main speakers Michael Taylor (Director), Kushi Kabir (Bangladesh) and, as Guest of Honour, President Robinson. A well filled St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast heard Michael Taylor and Gustavo Parajon (Nicaragua) a week later. In addition visitors from Kenya, the Gambia and Zimbabwe spent 12 days in Ireland visiting groups. Many local churches and districts celebrated in their own way, and a special "footstep" collection of 50ps, which still continues, was initiated.

Over the fifty years Irish churches have played their part in building up Christian Aid, and still continue to do so. Valuable financial support is received from the various denominational world development appeals. Christian Aid week depends on the warm and wholehearted support of many parishes and congregations, encouraged by enthusiastic organisers and in 1995 raised £331,612 with some still trickling in. Thanks are due to all concerned, and also to all the other donors who swelled our total Irish income for the last financial year to £1,585,506.

Christian Aid is looking forward in a world which appears to be losing its sense of community. Nations in general, including the UK, are reducing their commitment to care for the underprivileged, although the Irish government must be congratulated for increasing their aid budget once again. We hear stories of donor fatigue, although Christian Aid's regular income has not so far been seriously affected. There have been fewer acute emergencies this year so less emergency income has been received.

Christian Aid has also been promoting a campaign to highlight the problems caused for developing countries by the World Bank and the IMF, gaining more popular support than was originally thought possible. Recent statements of the World Bank do show a different tone; we hope our efforts have had some part in this. We would still like to see more church support for such campaigns.

At a more local level two students from Kenya are presently studying in Greenmount Agricultural College and visiting many farming homes at weekends; this will be followed by a return visit of Irish students to Kenya. In the Republic Michael Begg is visiting more local churches, while also ensuring that our voice is present in the many fora which influence development thinking and action in the Republic.

Ireland is well represented on the Christian Aid Board by Rosemary Calvert (nominated by ICC and also chair of our Irish committee), Rt Rev Roy Warke, Rev Jim Campbell and Mr Alf McCreary. Staff changes have seen Mary Purcell take up the post of part time fundraiser in Dublin dealing specifically with applications to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Third World Funds, while Liz Hoey and Andrea Begg have left their part time administrative posts and been replaced by Deborah Doherty and Genny Mullins. Michael Begg has visited projects in India and Ian McDowell, accompanied by Liz Hewitt and Bet Aalen of the Methodist Church and Church of Ireland, have been in India and Bangladesh. They, together with Margaret Boden and Tim Magowan, value all opportunities to share their experience with others and encourage consideration of our Christian response to some of the injustices of today's world.

INTER-CHURCH RECONCILIATION FUND FOR IRELAND

During the year the Inter-Church Emergency Fund for Ireland was renamed the Inter-Church Reconciliation Fund for Ireland in recognition of the changed circumstances in the community.

The following grants were agreed in 1995:

St Peter's Immaculata Youth Club, Belfast	
- for repairs and equipment	1,000
First Step Drop-in centre, Belfast - for building work	1,500
Ballynaveigh After Schools Club/Ballynaveigh	
Community Development Association - for mixed residential	350
Roden Street Festival Committee, Belfast - for festival costs	350
'Summer with a difference' project, Belfast - programme costs	700
Ardoyne Youth Club, Belfast - towards summer programme costs	342
John Paul Youth Club, Belfast - summer scheme costs	800
Fintona Development Association - for equipment	400
Corpus Christi Youth Centre, Ballymurphy, Belfast	
- for equipment	1,400
High Street Presbyterian Church, Antrim - for mixed residential	250
CAN Community Cafe, Larne - for equipment	1,500
Carrickfergus Community Church	
- for Sunnylands youth/community centre	1,200
Corrymeela Community - towards refurbishment of Cottages unit	2,000
Creggan Parent and Toddler Association, Derry	
- towards mixed residential	800
Brownlow Play Association - for summer and general programme	800

Nexus Ireland/Lucan Youth Centre	
- towards new multi-purpose hall	2,000
Wishing Well Family Centre, Belfast - for summer programme	700
CARE Trust, Belfast and London - for mixed holiday	500
Eskra Development Association, Co Tyrone - for summer scheme	400
Benburb Centre, Co Tyrone	
- towards refurbishment of youth wing	2,000
Magherafelt Women's Group - for office equipment	1,000
MUST Hostel, Cookstown - for kitchen refurbishment	1,400
Youth Together (St John's Church), Lurgan - for drop-in centre	1,400
174 Trust, Belfast - for building refurbishment	2,000
North West Women's Information Group	
- towards office set-up costs	1,000
Waterside Development Trust, Londonderry	
- for costs and expenses of community development workers	1,800
National Peace Council, London - for NI information pack	300
Christian Renewal Centre, Rostrevor	
- for repairs and refurbishment	2,000
Glenny Community Support Group - for building work	1,500
Dungiven Community Resource Centre - for women's courses	1,000
Sion Mills Youth Management Committee	
- for fixtures, fittings and equipment	1,500
Shantallow Ballyarnett Cross Community Group, Derry	
- for cross-community programme	750
National Council of YMCAs of Ireland	
- towards anti-sectarian programme and training	2,000
Faith and Friendship - towards residential festival costs	1,002
Between, Cork - for building work	3,000
Greystone Youth Club, Spring Farm, Antrim - programme costs	500
Inniskeel House Residential Centre, Narin, Co Donegal	
- to improving on site playing facilities	2,500
Alliance/Ardoyne Playscheme, Belfast - for summer scheme	1,000
Grosvenor Youth project, Belfast - for summer scheme	750
Dungannon Youth Club- towards cross-community programme	500
Ballyclare Community Concerns - for building upgrading work	2,000
Riverside Youth Club, Ballyclare - for building set-up costs	1,500
St Oliver Plunkett Youth Development Scheme, Belfast	
- towards summer programme costs	750

The following monies were designated by donors:

From Methodist Relief and Development Fund	
- Springfield Road Methodist Church	4,000
From Oekumenische Centrale of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen Deutschland -	
Corrymeela Community	26,890
Cornerstone Community	26,890
Youth Link: Northern Ireland	13,810

During the year two people from the Swiss Inter-Church Aid Agency, EPER, visited Ireland to discuss the work of the Fund and visit projects supported by it.

IRISH ECUMENICAL CHURCH LOAN FUND

The Committee agreed the following loans in 1995:

Waterside Development Trust - £15,000 for 3 years at 5% towards building work.

Irish School of Ecumenics - IR£15,000 for 3 years at 5% to help with indebtedness.

Between - IR£6,000 for 5 years at 5% towards refurbishing of holiday centre.

During the year the Committee has sought to make the availability of low interest loans better known, both North and South. The Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Rob Fairmichael, is very willing to speak to organisations wishing to explore the possibility of such a loan.

BELFAST CHURCHES' URBAN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Committee, under the chairmanship of the Rt. Rev. Gordon McMullan operates in association with the Council, but is appointed by Member Churches in the Belfast area, in order to encourage and facilitate local churches to develop their social, community and economic outreach. A Development Officer, Mr. Maurice Kinkead, took up appointment on April 1, 1995, funded by Making Belfast Work for a two-year period.

A survey of Protestant Churches in the greater Belfast area was carried out (see Appendix) and priorities for action identified and agreed. The survey showed that the Churches already have a significant role in social and community action, particularly in the areas of youth work, programmes for the elderly and work with young families.

The Committee has identified two key areas for its Development Officer - encouraging and resourcing the Churches in responding to social needs in disadvantaged areas. Mr. Kinkead is already responding to a significant number of requests for help and support. He can be contacted at Belfast 461931, 180 My Lady's Road, Belfast, BT6 8FD.

EUROPEAN ECUMENICAL COMMISSION FOR CHURCH AND SOCIETY

The Rev. Samuel Hutchinson and Dr. Kenneth Milne attended the Annual Meeting of the Commission held near Strasbourg in September. A submission was made to EECCS relating to the intergovernmental conference which is to be held during the Presidency of the Republic of Ireland in 1996. A letter was written to the Irish Parliamentarians on the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe urging acceptance of the Draft Convention on Bioethics.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The working group of the WCC Office of Church and Ecumenical Relations was held at the Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle, from November 18-24. The General Secretary spoke to the working party on ecumenical relations in Ireland.

THE CHURCHES' PEACE EDUCATION PROGRAMME

(The Churches' Peace Education Programme is the legal entity which runs the joint peace education programme of the Council and the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace of the Roman Catholic Church).

During the year Mrs. Brigid Lenane, the Peace Education Officer responsible for secondary schools, has been visiting secondary schools in Northern Ireland promoting the use of the new modules on violence *Power to Heal* and *More Power to Heal*. She is also in the process of completing a module for sixth forms on sectarianism. Sister Maura Ward, the ICJP Peace Education Officer in the Republic, completed a module on human rights for the upper secondary pupil called *Yes You Do Count* before retiring at the end of August. It was launched by President Robinson in October. The first and third parts of a new three-part programme for use at the upper primary level, under the collective title Pathways were completed during the year. The first part - *The Batzwa File* - was written by Ms Sarah Bennett, the Peace Education Officer with responsibility for primary schools, and examines the way we relate to ourselves, our families and our friends. The third part - *People Who Need People* - was written by Mr. Norman Richardson, a previous Peace Education Officer, and explores human differences and how to enjoy them. The second part, which examines our roles and responsibilities within the various communities to which we belong, is currently being piloted.

During the year the latest Resources Centre catalogue was disseminated to schools in Northern Ireland and the Republic. A considerable number of orders was generated.

The Rev. Tim Bartlett was appointed to the Management Group of the Programme in May. Bishop Michael Dallat became co-Chairman of the Trustees in succession to Bishop Patrick Walsh.

The Programme is currently exploring the possibility of someone being funded to promote contact between schools from North and South. Such an appointment would mean the Programme moving beyond the development and promotion of materials in schools to a more active involvement in joint study projects among students, perhaps based on a cluster of schools. A number of explorations have been made in this direction in order to develop contacts, e.g. with the Glencree Centre for Reconciliation and with Co-operation North.

IRISH INTER-CHURCH MEETING

(The Irish Inter-Church Meeting is a relationship between the Irish

Episcopal Conference of the Roman Catholic Church and the Member Churches of the Irish Council of Churches. The General Secretary of the ICC is Joint Secretary of IICM).

The fourteenth Meeting took place on November 3 and 4, 1995, at the Emmaus Conference Centre, Swords. The theme of the Friday afternoon session was 'The Churches' Particular Contribution to Peace at this Time' and the keynote speakers were the Rt. Rev. James Mehaffy, Mr. David Porter and the Most Rev. Michael Dallat. In the evening there was a panel to further pursue the theme. The Saturday morning dealt with 'The Challenges Facing us in Ireland Today' and was led by members of the Department of Theological Questions of the IICM.

The Irish Inter-Church Committee is seeking feedback from the Member Churches about the role and purpose of the Meetings and how future Meetings might be developed.

Irish Inter-Church Committee

The Committee met five times during 1995. The Church Leaders of the four larger Churches in Ireland were encouraged to make a statement on Sunday Trading which they did in October.

A meeting between members of the Irish Inter-Church Committee and representatives from British Churches took place in February 1995 in Belfast. A programme of visits and encounters was arranged before the meeting so that the British visitors had an opportunity to experience the new situation in the community following the ceasefires.

A joint delegation from the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the European Council of Roman Catholic Bishops' Conferences (CCEE) visited Ireland at the beginning of November and also attended the Irish Inter-Church Meeting. They were able to learn about reconciliation and ecumenical activity and meet Member Churches. They were also seeking to encourage Irish involvement in the Second European Ecumenical Assembly which is being held in June 1997 in Austria with the theme of reconciliation and is being organised jointly by CEC and CCEE. Consideration has been given by the Committee as to how Irish involvement can be encouraged and how delegates and participants can be prepared.

The second Sunday in Advent has been recognised by the Member Churches as a Common Bible Sunday. The idea of an Irish project to promote the use of the Bible, similar to the 'Open Book' project in England, has been discussed with the Bible Societies in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

A consultation of representatives from the Member Churches is being held in February 1996 to explore what the Churches are doing to mark the end of the millennium and see what it might be possible to do together.

The Committee in 1994 endorsed the idea of an Irish dimension to the Developing Missionary Congregations Project of the Churches'

Commission on Mission. In April 1995 members of the project visited Ireland and met people in Churches in part of South-West Belfast, the Dundrum area of Dublin and the Carlow/Kilkenny area. The project is nearing the end of Part One and funding is being sought to develop it.

During the year the post of Administrative Officer was reviewed and it was agreed that no substantive changes were required at this time.

The Rev. Kenneth Thompson was appointed to the CCBI's Four Nations Group dealing with faith and order issues.

Department of Theological Questions

The Department is currently finalising its study on 'Freedom, Justice and Responsibility in Ireland Today'. The Chairman of the Department, Bishop Donal Murray, has indicated his intention to resign, having completed his five-year term of office.

Department of Social Issues

The Churches made their nominations to the new enlarged Department and the first meeting was held in May with Miss Pamela Lockie as Chairperson. Various topics have been discussed including Community Development in a Christian context, Poverty, Sunday Trading and the UK Lottery.

Miss Margaret Burns, a member of the Department, is a member of a Churches' initiative looking at Unemployment and the Future of Work. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Gordon McMullan, Church of Ireland Bishop of Down and Dromore, is on the sponsoring group.

Local Ecumenism

A weekend for groups was held at the end of February 1995 at the Dromantine Conference Centre near Newry with the theme 'Resources for Worship and Bible Study'. There were nearly ninety participants with a good spread from North and South. It is hoped to have a similar event in 1997. The idea of a Day for Clergy Groups is being explored. Information continues to be sent twice a year to local ecumenical groups.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The sub-committee produced the Irish Order of Service for the third time.

APPENDIX

BELFAST CHURCHES' URBAN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN AREAS OF URBAN DEPRIVATION

This appendix is a brief summary of a more detailed report based on a survey of Protestant churches in the greater Belfast area, and personal contact with clergy, representatives of statutory agencies, and people and groups in local communities.

What are Protestant churches already doing?

The survey indicates that **Protestant churches are more involved in responding to social needs than is sometimes assumed**, and would appear to be one of the 'major players' operating in Protestant urban communities.

The survey revealed the following level of involvement:-

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| • Open youth clubs | 59% |
| • Programme for elderly | 62% |
| • Work with young families | 57% |
| • Premises available | 52% |

A number of churches (22%) were engaged in joint projects with other churches, while a slightly higher number (27%) were involved in some formal way with other community organisations.

Difficulties experienced in responding to social needs

There were two common difficulties:

- lack of finance and lack of leadership.

Perhaps more significant was the attitudes to church involvement in response to social need. A number of clergy referred to **apathy and resistance from within the congregation**, but even more common were **negative attitudes perceived from outside the church**, from both the local community and statutory agencies. Such attitudes were interpreted as based on suspicion that churches had 'another agenda', or were not really in touch with the local community.

Experience of statutory agencies

While most groups' experience of statutory agencies was either non-existent or good, some did indicate a negative experience.

Common complaints included:-

- Being outside the Making Belfast Work (MBW) area
- Change in MBW structure/personnel
- Slow response to applications
- Too much 'red tape'

Support and resources

Apart from practical resources such as finance and staff, the most **commonly requested resource was for advice** in relation to ideas/general approach and fund-raising. There were also a number of requests for help in dealing with both statutory agencies and local communities, usually from groups who were experiencing some difficulties, and also for help in identifying what resources, including financial resources, are available.

Context within which churches operate

In addition to surveying churches, contact was also made with statutory and other funding agencies, and with a number of groups and residents within local communities. Given the perception of many churches that there are negative attitudes toward their involvement in community work, it was felt to be important to identify the context in which Protestant churches are working in response to social needs, and how this affects their activity?

There are three main factors

- Policy/practice of statutory agencies
- Attitude of local communities
- Fragmentation of Protestantism

Statutory and other public agencies

There are a whole range of agencies responsible for providing resources to groups responding to social needs, and such support is dependant on a clear demonstration of need, and competence to meet it.

However, many agencies are also concerned about the approach taken by churches, particularly in initiatives based in local communities. There is a suspicion, often based on previous experience, that churches are working to other agendas, in relation either to evangelism or to church property repair, and alongside this is a feeling that church structures and attitudes greatly restrict their ability to work effectively with non-church groups in any kind of genuine partnership.

The local community

There is a widespread perception and criticism that Protestant churches are not involved in their communities, at least in urban areas, and while in some cases this implies a desire for them to become involved, in most cases concern is expressed about such involvement.

Concerns raised include:

- Suspicion about church 'agendas'
- Church people seen as coming from outside local community
- Church wanting to control projects
- No good 'track record'
- Narrow views in relation to entertainment, etc
- Churches 'diverting' resources from the 'local community'
- Church property not available to local non-church groups

Churches

There are two key factors which impact on church social action - **fragmentation**, with often up to ten or more churches operating in one small community, and **competitiveness**, where churches are competing for both funds and 'clientele'.

Copies of the full report are available from either Maurice Kinhead, 180 My Ladys Road, Belfast, BT6 8FD (Tel. 461931) or The Irish Council of Churches, 48 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast BT9 6AZ (Tel. 663145)

THE IRISH COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

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Inter-Church Centre, 48 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast BT9 6AZ

Tel: 663145

Constituent Communion and their Leaders 1995/96:

Church of Ireland:	Most Rev. Dr. R.H.A. Eames
Lutheran Church in Ireland:	Pastor P.G. Fritz
Methodist Church in Ireland:	Rev. C. Walpole
Moravian Church, Irish District:	Rev. L. Broadbent
Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church:	Rt. Rev. T.W. Coey
Presbyterian Church in Ireland:	Rt. Rev. Dr. J.R. Ross
Religious Society of Friends:	J. Muriel Cameron
Salvation Army:	Lt. Col. J. Wilson/ Major G. Blurton (from Oct. 1995)

Members appointed by the Constituent Communion:

Church of Ireland:

Mrs. E. Aalen	Rev. I. Knox
Miss. J. Barcroft	Rev. Canon J.C.D. Mayes
Most Rev. Dr. D.A.R. Caird	Mr. W.T. Morrow
Rev. D.W.T. Crooks	Mr. J.T.N. McGaffin
Rev. Dr. I.M. Ellis	Mrs. R. McKelvey
Rev. Canon D.S.G. Godfrey	Rt. Rev. Dr. J.R.W. Neill
Rt. Rev. B.D.A. Hannon	Mrs. J. Peters
Rev. Canon A.J. Houston	Rev. Canon R. Richey
Rev. Dr. Canon M.C. Kennedy	Rev. T.R. Williams

Lutheran Church:

Mr. J. Johnston	Mr. M. Sauter
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Methodist Church

Rev. D. Cooper	Dr. E. Loane
Mrs. I.M. Gallagher	Rev. Dr. J. McMaster
Rev. B.D. Griffin	Rev. E.T.I. Mawhinney
Rev. T. Kingston	Miss F. Moffitt
Mrs. G. Kingston	Dr. F. O'Ferrall

Moravian Church:

Rt. Rev. J.H. Cooper	Mr. D. Woods
Rev. V.D. Launder	

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church:

Mrs. J. Flegg	Rev. D. Steers
Rev. A. McQ. McCormick	

Presbyterian Church in Ireland:

Rev. S.J. Campbell
 Rev. A.D. Davidson
 Rev. J.S.B. Drennan
 Rev. H.A. Dunlop
 Very Rev. Dr. J. Dunlop
 Rev. Dr. R.J.G. Gray
 Rev. R. Herron
 Rev. S. Hutchinson
 Mrs. M. Irwin
 Miss P. Lockie

Rev. T.J. McCormick
 Rev. C.J.C. McMullen
 Miss C. McRoberts
 Mrs. D. Millar
 Rev. D. Nesbitt
 Mr. J. Patterson
 Rev. Dr. W. Porter
 Mrs. E. Sheppard
 Rev. J.A.McN. Scott

Religious Society of Friends:

Helen Haughton
 Felicity McCartney

Dr. David B.R. Poole

Salvation Army:

Capt. S. Symonds

Coopted Members of Council

Mrs. S. Ayling (until Oct. 1995)
 Mr. J. Unsworth

Rev. S.L. Wallace

Officers of the Council 1995/96:

President:
 Vice President:
 Honorary Treasurer:

Rt. Rev. J.H. Cooper
 Rev. D. Nesbitt
 Miss. H. McMillan,
 FCA., L.TCL.

Immediate Past President:
 General Secretary:

Rt. Rev. B.D.A. Hannon
 Dr. R.D. Stevens

Executive Committee (as at 31st December 1995)**Church of Ireland:**

Rev. Dr. I.M. Ellis
 Rev. Canon J.C.M. Mayes

Rt. Rev.Dr. J. Neill
 Rev. T.R. Williams

Lutheran Church:

Pastor P.G. Fritz

Methodist Church:

Rev. E.T.I. Mawhinney

Rev. Dr. J. McMaster

Moravian Church:

Rev. L. Broadbent

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church: Rev. D. Steers

Presbyterian Church:

Rev. H.A. Dunlop
 Rev. R. Herron

Rev. S. Hutchinson
 Rev. T.J. McCormick

Religious Society of Friends:

Dr. David B.R. Poole

Salvation Army:

Lt. Col. J. Wilson/.

Major G. Blurton (From Oct. 1995)

alt. Lt. B. Poxon/

Capt. S. Symonds

All Members:

None at present

Coopted:

Rev. Canon D.S.G. Godfrey

Rev. Dr. R.J.G. Gray/

Rev. V.D. Launder

(from Oct. 1995)

Staff of the Council:

General Secretary:

Dr. R.D. Stevens

Associate Secretary:

Mr. R. Fairmichael

Administrative Secretary:

Mrs. F. Pyper

Secretarial Assistant/Bookkeeper:

Mrs. D. McFarland

BOARDS**Inter-Church Affairs:**

Moderator:

Rev. Canon D.S.G. Godfrey

Deputy Moderator:

Rev. R. Herron

Secretariat:

Dr. R.D. Stevens

Overseas Affairs:

Moderator:

Rev. Dr. R.J.G. Gray/

Rev. V.D. Launder

(from Oct. 1995)

Mrs. I.M. Gallagher

Deputy Moderator:

Mr. H. Calvert/

Honorary Secretary:

Mr. R. Fairmichael

(from Oct. 1995)

COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

on Christian Aid:

Rosemary Calvert

on Irish Committee of Christian Aid:

Mrs. M. Gallagher

on Christian Education Movement:

Mr. D. Woods

on Commission on Racial Justice
of CCBI:

Mrs. Fee Ching Cameron

on Standing Committee of Churches'
Commission on Mission:

Rev. P. Kingston

on Four Nations Forum on
Evangelisation:

Rev. Canon D.S.G. Godfrey

on Irish Churches' Council for Television
and Radio Affairs (Republic):

Capt. S. Symonds

on Churches' Peace Education Programme:

Trustees:	The President	Management Group:	Mr. M. Arlow
	Vice President		Dr. R.D. Stevens
	Immediate Past President		Mr. J. Unsworth
	Honorary Treasurer		
	General Secretary		

on Inter-Church Reconciliation Fund for Ireland: Mrs. N. Dodds
Rev. Dr. J. McMaster
Mr. I. Slaine
General Secretary

on Irish Ecumenical Church Loan Fund Committee:

Dr. M. Downes	Mr. J. McMillan
Mr. J. Fitzpatrick	Mr. Irwin Pearson
Mrs. H. Gilfedder	Mr. H.R. Roberts
Mr. R.W. Jess, F.C.A	Rev. Canon R. Richey
Mrs. L. Hopley	Mr. J. Smyth
Mr. R.C. Lewis-Crosby	Mr. R. Fairmichael
Miss. H. McMillan	General Secretary

on Irish Inter-Church Meeting: The President, Vice President
Moderators of the Boards of
Inter-Church Affairs and
Overseas Affairs

on Irish Inter-Church Committee: The President, Vice President

ECUMENICAL AND OTHER ADDRESSES

Christian Aid	48 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6AZ (Telephone: Belfast 381204) Christ Church, Rathgar Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6. (Telephone: Dublin 966184)
Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland:	Inter-Church House, 35-41 Lower Marsh, London, SE1 7RL (Telephone: 0171-620 4444)
National Council of Churches of Christ:	475 Riverside Drive, New York 10027, U.S.A.
Conference of European Churches:	P.O. Box 2100, 150 route de Ferney, CH-1211, Geneva 2, Switzerland
European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society:	Rue Joseph 11, 174, B 1040 Brussels. 18 rue Charles Appell, F-6700 Strasbourg.

