

87TH ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
IRISH COUNCIL
OF CHURCHES
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 2009



SUBMITTED TO THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
MARCH 2010

CONSTITUENT COMMUNIONS

at 31 January 2010

Church	[Dates of Joining ICC]	Website
Antiochian Orthodox Church	2005	www.belfast.antiochian.org.uk
Church of Ireland	1923	www.ireland.anglican.org
Greek Orthodox Church in Britain & Ireland	1997	No website at present
LifeLink Network of Churches	1998	No website at present
Lutheran Church in Ireland	1972	www.lutheran-ireland.org
Methodist Church in Ireland	1923	www.irishmethodist.org
Moravian Church, Irish District	1923	www.moravian.org.uk
Presbyterian Church in Ireland	1923	www.presbyterianireland.org
Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church	1923	www.nspresbyterian.org
Religious Society of Friends	1923	www.quakers-in-ireland.ie
Rock of Ages Cherubim & Seraphim	2001	No website at present
Romanian Orthodox Church	2004	No website at present
Russian Orthodox Church in Ireland	2003	www.stpeterstpaul.net
Salvation Army (Ireland Division)	1965	www.salvationarmy.org

Officers of the Council at 31 January 2010

President	Rev Tony Davidson (Presbyterian Church)
Vice President	Most Rev Richard Clarke (Church of Ireland)
Honorary Treasurer	Mr Robert Cochran (Methodist Church)
Immediate Past President	Ms Gillian Kingston (Methodist Church)
General Secretary	Mr Michael Earle

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**ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
IRISH COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**

Submitted to the Annual Meeting of the Council, March 2010

THE HISTORICAL MANDATE The Irish Council of Churches is constituted by “Christian Communion in Ireland willing to join in united efforts to promote the spiritual, physical, moral and social welfare of the people and the extension of the rule of Christ among all nations and over every region of human life” (1966 constitution as amended in 1995).

This mandate was extracted word for word from the original constitution that established the United Council of Christian Churches and Religious Communities in Ireland in 1922 (John Barkley, 1983: *The Irish Council of Churches 1923-1983*). There were seven founding member churches at the Council’s first meeting in January 1923 (Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church, Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church, Moravian Church, Congregational Union, and the Religious Society of Friends/Quakers).

SIGNIFICANCE This historical background is significant as it indicates that the Council’s ecumenical beginnings were shaped by the aftermath of World War 1 and the period when partition and the border had just been created on this island.

Few will appreciate that this Council was also one of the earliest pioneers of National Councils of Churches throughout the world and that six of its seven founding churches continue in its membership today. Membership of the Council has now more than doubled to fourteen churches.

The original Council started in the context of momentous changes in Ireland. It served at the cutting edge for those churches wanting to express their Christian witness in working together for the benefit of all peoples, both locally and overseas. Its mandate covered the whole island and continues to reflect the All-Ireland focus of most of its member churches.

The question facing us today is how relevant is this mandate to our member churches in 2010? Is our work still at the cutting edge?

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2009



The scriptures conclude with a magnificent flourish. We are given a picture which inspires us to see beyond the immediate human reality of tears, conflict, struggle, pain and death.

Revelation 21

¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

²I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

⁴He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

This picture of the New Jerusalem has inspired Christians from different churches, continents and centuries. It is exhilarating to think that each day God is doing something new with our own personalities, the people around us, the churches we worship in, and the earth beneath our feet.

Tears were evident after the brutal killing of two soldiers Mark Quinsey and Patrick Azimkar outside Masserene Barracks in Antrim on March 7th and the shooting dead of Stephen Carroll a policeman in Craigavon on March 9th. There are many dark forces which could drag us back into a violent, divided and hate-filled past. Yet in March, Christian people were soon together in solidarity, praying and working for a shared peaceful new Jerusalem. It was a privilege to be involved with Evangelical Alliance and leaders of the churches in encouraging condemnation of evil and solidarity with good. Many in our society are still struggling to come to terms with all that has occurred during past periods of violent conflicts. Miroslav Volf in his book, *"The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World"* challenges his readers to *"remember the past with an eye to the future vision of the new Jerusalem. 'Our minds will be rapt in the goodness of God and in the goodness of God's new world, and the memories of wrongs will wither away like plants without water.'*" As we celebrate significant historical events in the next 10 years, we need to reflect on how we establish a distinctive Christian way to remember.

The AGM in 2009 took place on 2nd April, the same day the G7 met in London. The theme was *"Living for Tomorrow's World – green? global? greedy?"*

We received prophetic insights from Lorna Gold from Trôcaire and Mark Gray from the Presbyterian World Development committee. This was a day when we could see beyond the present economic crisis to envisage a new Jerusalem built on an alternative economy. I was fascinated, later in the year to read this response from a group of Protestant evangelicals to Pope Benedict's encyclical.

"In Caritas in Veritate we find an analysis of global affairs that rejects the oversimplifying polarization of free market and active government solutions. As the encyclical teaches, 'authentically human social relationships of friendship, solidarity and reciprocity can also be conducted within economic activity, and not only outside it or 'after' it.' Economic life is not amoral or autonomous. Economic institutions, including markets themselves, must be marked by internal relations of solidarity and trust."

The building of the new Jerusalem requires the thinking of a broad spectrum of Christians.

John's vision of a renewed heaven and earth reminds us that the earth on which we walk is sacred territory. At the 2010 AGM in March, our theme will be **"Renewing the Face of the Earth"**. The keynote speaker will be Bishop David Atkinson, former Bishop of Thetford.

2009 was marked by a crisis of confidence in many of the great institutions of the island from banks, to political parties and churches. It has been a humbling experience for many of us to come to terms with the fallenness of our own institutions. The challenge is to look to Jesus, the lamb on the throne, to whom all human institutions will ultimately bow.

In 2009, ICC executive identified ministerial health as a priority across the churches. In November there was a consultation held in Dromantine. Much wisdom was shared across the churches about how to develop healthy accountable practices in ministry, which encourage hope in the midst of stress and crisis.

Much of our work in ICC is relational. We were deeply saddened at the loss of Linda Clarke, wife of Vice President Bishop Richard, and Anne Earle, wife of General Secretary, Michael. Beyond those tears, we were aware of the faith and courage of Michael and Richard as well as their families and church communities.

In 2009, Michael decided to resign as General Secretary and return for a period to his home in Christchurch in New Zealand. Michael was someone who kept his focus on John's picture of the New Jerusalem. He was enthusiastic for God.

His vision of an inclusive church, made up of people from every nation, tongue and culture, was infectious. Due to his meticulous and inspiring planning of inter-church meetings and ICC AGMs, participants were inspired by hope. Michael has been God's gift to Irish churches over the last 5 years.

Also during 2009 Jennifer Fernandez resigned from the post of administrator. In a short time, Jennifer made a big impact. Not only did she rationalise our finances but she was able to adroitly organise pages for meetings into little folders. This was a big bonus for an administratively challenged President. Jennifer brought her life experience to the post of administrator. She had a listening ear and a wise tongue. She saw beyond immediate tasks to John's greater vision.

As Michael and Jennifer leave we welcome back Karen Kelly to the post of administrator. We are so thankful that Karen was able to be part of the ICC team again at this challenging time in our history. Others who have helped us be part of God's great plan for his new Jerusalem include Philip McKinley, who has been appointed under the Irish Inter-Church Meeting as part-time Ecumenical Officer based in Dublin for 3 years. It has been wonderful to have his new insights and youthful exuberance. Adrian Cristea work with the Parish-based Integration Project has helped keep alive John's vision of every nation, tribe, people and language, together worshipping in the new Jerusalem. Rob Fairmichael continues to look after the Church in Society Forum and the Board of Overseas Affairs. His experience and wisdom is much appreciated. Robert Cochran has been acting as Treasurer since August. We have welcomed his financial expertise and knowledge.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the Executive members who together have sought to reflect on what God is saying to the churches. We welcome Major Alan Watters who replaced Major David Jackson of Salvation Army and Remi Ilori, Stella Obafemi-Akodu and Isaac Adeleie who represent Cherubim and Seraphim. Thanks also to Roberta McKelvey and Marian Woods who have completed their terms as co-opted members on Executive. Finally, I would like to thank Gillian Kingston, former President, and Richard Clarke, Vice President for being friends and colleagues with whom I can converse, discuss, and share John's vision which still inspires us in ICC.

Rev Tony Davidson

ICC President (2008 - 2010)

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT 2009



Vision: It was an awesome moment - driving to an inter-church meeting along a recently opened motorway extension south of Newry - for the first time. It was pure ecstasy on an otherwise ordinary, cloudy and damp December morning.

Memories flooded back to the long queues from those dark years of army checkpoints and border controls at the Forkhill roundabout underneath this new motorway flyover; the surrounding watchtowers that had created deep local feelings of suspicion, distrust, anger and resentment; the long delays on that dark winding road through the densely forested valley towards Dundalk; the endless waiting for explosives and trucks bearing heavy loads from gigantic machines that slowly munched their way through a seemingly impenetrable landscape of rocky cliffs.

After years of patient waiting, it was suddenly all over. Barriers and obstacles had all been removed, borders made invisible, a new route had been created and with it came a deep sense of wonder and freedom at the physical transformation that has been achieved by all involved. I drove down that new motorway section with a new song in my heart.

Was this a sign of what lies in front of all pilgrims travelling on the ecumenical journey? So much time spent waiting with endless persistence and patience for real obstacles to be removed - then we unexpectedly discover a glimpse into that mystery of Kingdom living. As we **welcome the Christ in 'the other'** - however different from ourselves, we recognise each other as brothers and sisters within the same body, receive that gift of visible unity in Christ and a clearer vision of the kind of upside down and transformed community that Christ calls us to build.

Kingdom living calls us to worship our Lord together and acknowledge our brokenness; embrace Gospel values of weakness and emptiness, rather than ego and strength; difference, rather than sameness; right relationships with, rather than dominance over our local and global neighbours; inspiration to bring light to places of darkness; faith, hope, and love to develop reconciled rather than divided communities; commitment to care deeply about our stewardship of all creation; and a willingness to walk together with a new song in our hearts.

This dissident Jesus calls us to **'come, follow me.'** (Mark 1.17) and make him the centre of our lives.

Task: The ecumenical task of building visible Christian unity is the Lord's work and prayer. Unity is a gift of 'being together', not something to strive for. Sharp doctrinal and ecclesiological differences remain between our member churches. Nevertheless our work is about being the hands, feet and mind of Christ in Kingdom building, working together where we can to build the common good, breaking down the walls both in our neighbourhoods, as well as in our own hearts and minds. It's about building trust and humanising relationships, as opposed to constantly looking over our shoulders in fear of those who are different.

The Council provides a useful forum for a wide fellowship of families from Protestant, Orthodox and Independent churches to meet together on their own, with the Irish Episcopal Conference (Catholic Church), and with other ecumenical partners. It has no agenda of its own apart from developing the common life of its member churches and raising awkward questions about our times and context.

In acting as their ecumenical instrument, the Council has a continuing role to create spaces for their representatives to meet, pray and act together; to grow the churches' common agendas; to create resources and animate local inter-church networks; and to take fresh initiatives in the context of this divided island.

The Council's witness and list of involvements in ecumenical ministry continues to grow year by year and we have much to be grateful for the gift of time and commitment given by so many. This is a ministry which reflects the response to Jesus' love for each of us and his challenge to build the Kingdom and live together in right relationships with each other and our neighbours (John 13:34-35).

Practice: In submitting this **87th annual report** to the fourteen member churches of the Irish Council of Churches, I can confirm that many have experienced 'awesome' moments this past year through the Council's work with its member churches and partners on this island. Some of these events are listed within the overview of ministry activities undertaken in 2009 (pages 16/19).

Initiatives: I'd like to draw attention to some initiatives taken during the year

- Appointment of an ICC Ecumenical Officer (part-time) in the Republic for the first time - Philip McKinley's initial focus for this three year project is to develop a mapping exercise that documents local inter-church activity taking place around the island – this work is well underway after the first seven months and when completed will be available as a resource on the website www.irishchurches.org

- An Inter-Church Meeting was held in Dublin on ***‘Baptism in Contemporary Ireland’*** A consultation was held with member churches on ministerial health/clergy stress – this created space for member churches to share with each other their research, resources and information about their support systems in this vital area of caring for those in ministry leadership.
- Development of an ecumenical declaration with ten key affirmations addressing migration, racism and interculturalism which IICC has commended to its member churches with the request to mainstream this in their ministries and report progress on actions taken after 12 months.
- First round table meeting was held with leaders of the eight Irish-based Orthodox churches – further meetings are planned in 2010
- First round table meeting was held with leaders of several larger migrant-led African Pentecostal churches identified through the new Directory – details also on the website
- The AGM will be invited to consider a groundbreaking nomination of the first Orthodox church leader to the office of the ICC Presidency for the period 2012-2014 – Revd Fr Godfrey O’Donnell (Romanian Orthodox) had been proposed by the four Orthodox member churches.
- Reconfiguration of two Forums (Theology Forum, Church in Society Forum) under the Irish Inter-Church Committee with new nominations made by the member churches
- Hosted a lunch in Belfast to enable the key Personal Assistants of the leaders of our member churches to meet each other and grow the links between their churches
- Joint submission made to International Fund for Ireland and European Union Peace 3 programme to fund a major new Inter Church Peace Programme (ICPP) in Northern Ireland and the Border region for a three-year period from 2010-12. This will involve the four largest church denominations in Ireland working in a collaborative church partnership with ICC to promote a Good Relations, Reconciliation and Peace programme in selected local areas – the Presbyterian Church has agreed to be the lead partner if the application is successful
- Increasing usage of the inter-church website at www.irishchurches.org to communicate details of ecumenical dates, events, speeches and ***Irish EcumenicalNews***.

AGM 2009:

The 86th Annual Meeting was held on a perfect spring day on April 2nd and generously hosted by the Moravian Church in their settlement at Gracehill Village, outside Ballymena, Co. Antrim. Eighty five delegates and guests arrived from all over the island to hear Dr Lorna Gold (Advocacy Manager, Trócaire, Dublin) give an inspiring keynote address on the theme *‘Living for Tomorrow’s World – green? global? greedy?’* with an excellent response given by Rev Dr Mark Gray (Presbyterian Church in Ireland) – both talks can be downloaded from the website at www.irishchurches.org Discussion groups and the formal business followed after lunch. It was a brilliant and most memorable day.

AGM 2010:

Bishop David Atkinson (retired Church of England Bishop of Thetford) has been invited to address the next AGM which will be held on March 25th in Quaker House, Rathfarnham, Dublin. The programme will have an environmental theme and at the time of writing is still being finalised.

AGM 2011:

Rev John Brackenridge (PCI) and the churches in Lisburn, Co. Antrim have offered to host the following AGM on April 7th 2011 at First Lisburn Presbyterian Church. The location offers excellent facilities, food, nearby parking, good access to the motorway and, most importantly, a strong ecumenical team from the seven churches involved in the Lisburn City Centre Ministers’ Fellowship. This offer will be raised during the Business meeting of the AGM.

Archives: Some progress was made on this during the summer in anticipation of an office move, but much more time is needed to complete this task. The Council is grateful to the Librarians at the Irish School of Ecumenics for offering to archive key records held in the Inter-Church Centre in Belfast.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland: Under revised Articles and Memorandums, the Council has now become a full member of CTBI and no longer has observer status. The Executive has appointed Ms Gillian Kingston to represent them on the Trust for the next three years with Rev John Brackenridge as her alternate. Gillian, along with the General Secretaries from ICC and CTBI, keeps the Executive regularly informed on 4-nations meetings, plans and developments, while the Council is represented on all five of CTBI’s networks (Church in Society, Mission, Inter-Religious dialogue, Racial Justice and International Students).

The Religious Society of Friends, the Church of Ireland, Methodist and Catholic Churches continue to contribute financially to CTBI from Ireland, while the local Antiochian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Moravian, Russian Orthodox churches and Salvation Army are members through their church headquarters based in England.

Finances: After a 12 month gap without a Treasurer, Robert Cochran generously agreed to be appointed in August, subject to a review at the AGM. For the first time, budgets over a three year cycle (2009-2011) have been prepared and approved. A lot of work has been done in the autumn by the Administrator and new Treasurer to address the mélange of 19 historical accounts held for different purposes with different banks in both jurisdictions. As of January 2010, these have now been consolidated into five accounts, all held within the Ulster Bank (University Road, Belfast) which can meet our various needs in both currency zones.

Irish Inter-Church Meeting on Baptism: On 19th November, fifty five delegates gathered at the Emmaus Centre in Dublin to listen to Bishop Richard Clarke (Church of Ireland) give an inspiring keynote address on 'Baptism and the ecumenical project in Ireland.' Dr. Diarmuid Martin (Catholic Archbishop of Dublin) and Rev Prof Drew Gibson (Presbyterian Church) gave stimulating responses – all three speeches are available on the website, as well as an excellent summary of the day written by Susan Gately. Further perspectives were presented by the Orthodox Church (Fr Irenaeus du Plessis), Religious Society of Friends (Eoin Stephenson) and the Redeemed Christian Church of God (Pastor Kunle Daniel). A panel of parents then shared stories of their personal and parish team experiences of baptism, followed by an open plenary. Fr Kieran McDermott PP, Rev Katherine Meyer (Presbyterian) and Philip McKinley (Church of Ireland) led the opening and closing worship. It was a memorable time of fellowship and learning. It raised new areas for common preparation which the new Theology Forum may give further consideration to.

Irish Inter-Church Committee: This group met on three occasions and organised the Inter- Church Meeting. The Committee continues to be a vital informal forum to exchange information between member churches and build common ground. Decisions taken during the year included agreement to: reconstitute and change the terms of reference for its two Forums (Theology; Church in Society); appoint Rev Prof Brendan Leahy and Ms Gillian Kingston as co-Moderators of the Theology Forum; decline a proposal to establish an International Affairs Forum; appoint an IICC Ecumenical Officer based in Dublin and a Steering group to monitor the three-year project; retain IICC's existing mandate for inter-church dialogue, but not ask member churches to extend this to inter-faith or inter-religious dialogues; write to An Taoiseach suggesting the value of joint meetings between Government and member churches

in addition to bilateral meetings that were becoming less frequent; invite presentations from Adrian Cristea (Parishbased Integration Project), Philip McKinley (IICC Ecumenical Officer) and African Pentecostal churches (Redeemed Christian Church of God and Mountain Fire Ministries); acknowledge Bishop Gerry Clifford's contribution to this Committee over 30 years; and thank Robert Cochran for convening IICC's two previous committees on social issues from 2002-9.

Membership: Several enquiries and applications to join the Council were received during the year, but none are being recommended at this stage to the AGM.

Pilgrimage: In November, Executive members undertook a pilgrimage by foot to visit and engage with clergy from four of the churches (Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and Romanian Orthodox) involved in the ecumenical Advent Walk of Light in the Leeson Park area of Dublin. This event is organised each year by the Dublin Council of Churches.

Presentations: During the year, presentations were given to ICC Executive by: Canon Bob Fyffe (CTBI General Secretary), Rev Dr Lesley Carroll (member of the Eames-Bradley Consultative Group on the Past), Dr Gladys Ganiel and Therese Cullen (Irish School of Ecumenics' research project 2009-2011), Dr Matthews Mar Timotheos (Metropolitan, Indian Orthodox), Rev Colin Campbell (German Protestant Kirchentag), Rev Dr Allen Sleith and Rev Lorraine Kennedy-Ritchie (Conference of European Churches Assembly) Ms Denise Wright (racial justice issues and work with Roma families in Belfast); Margaret Boden (Christian Aid Ireland); and those representing ICC at annual church assemblies. In addition, overseas speakers addressed five seminars organised by ICC's Board of Overseas Affairs during the year. Our thanks to them all.

Property: With no movement in the commercial property market, the Executive decided to take 48 Elmwood Avenue off the market and review the situation in 12 months time (October 2010). The Council will incur a penalty fee of £1,750 if it withdraws from its ongoing contract with Lisney (Chartered Surveyors). Executive has confirmed that all money from any sale of the building will be used for charitable purposes and not for investment purposes. Repairs, decorating and minor maintenance have been carried out both inside and outside the building during the year. TIDES Training and Embrace NI continue to share office space with ICC staff. We remain grateful to ISE (Dublin) for making space available for a small office for the two IICC staff members based in Dublin.

Publications: An updated and expanded version of an increasingly relevant booklet written by Rev Dr Kieran O'Mahony OSA was prepared. 'What the Bible says about the Stranger' was published in June by the All Ireland Churches Consultative Meeting on Racism. Three copies of Irish Ecumenical News were also produced, distributed and posted on the website.

Priorities 2010

With the completion of the last three year strategic plan, the Executive has given consideration to the wider themes of 2010 being the ‘Centenary year of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference on Mission’ and the ‘Year of European Churches responding to Migration’ (Conference of European Churches).

It has considered ongoing contentious issues in Northern Ireland, including increasing incidents of sectarianism, racism, hate crime and punishment beatings; segregation in a divided post-conflict society; the dissident threat at its highest level in six years with three security personnel murdered in 2009 and an attempted murder of a policeman in the new year; a high achievement gap in education; alienation in working class Loyalist communities; increasing tensions and impasses within the Assembly Executive and a desperate lack of political progress in developing and implementing both a Shared Future policy and devolution of policing and justice. We remain hopeful that the positive changes achieved since 1998 can be built on and the peace process can continue to produce results in people’s hearts and minds.

It’s been said that ‘we live apart, we play apart, we socialise apart, we learn apart.’ Yet none can refute that significant ecumenical cooperation already takes place ‘where it itches’ in respect of homelessness, addictions, child protection and personal care. Many additional inter-church relationships and initiatives have been quietly nurtured by committed people over many years at local level throughout the province. There is so much to be grateful for as we treasure and document these signs of creating ‘another way’ to separated neighbourhoods and benign apartheid.

Contentious issues in the Republic include the effects of the global banking crisis, measures taken to address an enormous deficit in public finances, issues in the health sector; drug issues and gang violence; the breakdown of trust in the aftermath of a number of official reports (Murphy and others) into historical cases of clerical child abuse, and its systemic cover up by the Catholic Church.

Executive has identified common issues in both jurisdictions relating to the effects of the recession, growing unemployment and poverty, changing attitudes to migrants, growing secularism, increasing concerns about climate change and the care of the environment. However, there are very different economic, political and cultural factors operating either side of the border.

There is an urgent need to address these contexts and pose the awkward questions, asking what is the ecumenical task to be done by churches witnessing together to bring God's light to the issues of the day, whether this addresses the precariousness of the current power sharing arrangements in an election year or the impasse over a shared future in the north, or discerns the ecumenical task to be taken in the aftermath of the Ryan and Murphy reports in the south.

May our hearts and actions be open to the inspiration from the words from the prayer of commitment from this year's Scottish material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity:

Take us from where we are to where you want us to be. Make us not merely guardians of a heritage, but living signs of your coming Kingdom. Fire us with passion for justice and peace between all people. Fill us with that faith, hope and love, which embody the Gospel – and through the power of the Holy Spirit make us one. That the world may believe, that your name may be enthroned in our nation, that your church may more effectively be your body, we commit ourselves to love you, serve you and follow you as pilgrims not strangers. Amen

New strategic priorities have yet to be agreed by the member churches in establishing a direction that the Council can effectively work on together within its available financial resources. The following areas are likely to impact on the Council's work over the next three years (2010-2012):

- (i) Development of the ***Inter-Church Peace Programme*** if the funding applications are successful. This would enable local churches to work more closely together as catalysts for reconciliation (Romans 12.9) in contentious neighbourhoods and join partners in building healthy community relationships
- (ii) ***Strengthening local inter-church activities*** around the island by building on the mapping exercise that Philip McKinley is currently developing
- (iii) Encouraging member churches to mainstream the Gospel-driven ***Affirmations on Migration and Racism*** as part of their mission and ecumenical witness (with at least 60 ethnic minorities in NI and more than 150 ethnic groups in the Republic)
- (iv) ***Sustainability*** in our stewardship of creation, scarce natural resources, issues of climate change; in our choice of lifestyles; in promoting a 'theology of enough' and simplicity, in contrast to excessive consumption and greed

- (v) ***Growing relationships*** and ‘ginking’ with un-likeminded pilgrims within the Irish membership; with churches in the 4-nations through CTBI; and with non-member churches on this island, particularly with the migrant-led churches
- (vi) Nurturing the ecumenical vision amongst ***younger people*** and creating opportunities for them to engage and participate
- (vii) Creating spaces for a more visible presence and engagement with the ***wider public*** over contentious issues at a time of increasing secularisation
- (viii) Focusing only on ***work that cannot be undertaken by IICC*** and its two new IICC Forums
- (ix) Being more intentional about ICC’s strap-line ‘***Cross-ing Boundaries***’; creating spaces for ‘***difficult conversations***’; and sharing stories of hope, renewal and transformation that go deeper than just desiring an economic recovery
- (x) Addressing whether inter-church work on this island needs to sharpen its ecumenical focus on the very different contextual realities (politically, economically and socially) ***in each jurisdiction***, as well as continuing to take an all-island perspective
- (xi) Addressing the age, ethnic and gender ***imbalances*** in our meetings

I remain concerned about an emerging trend that reduces ICC to representing only the smaller member churches, leaving the four largest churches (as the main funders of the inter-church structures) to act together or denominationally when it suits them. The ecumenical task involves all, not just a few. It’s not about being large or small. It’s about honouring commitments made to each other. It’s about being and acting as one body of Christ.

I have always tried to make our complex structures work, but there are growing anomalies that the two Dublin appointments made by IICC in recent years (PIP Project Officer and Ecumenical Officer) have actually had to be employed by ICC as the only registered employer. It becomes increasingly messy, confusing and illogical to explain to the ecumenical family and wider community.

Thanks: When stories are told that barely fifty years ago, Catholics and Protestants would not have been allowed to enter each other’s buildings to attend funerals, we realise just how far inter-church relationships have developed on this island. The pace of change may be too slow for some, but let’s celebrate the progress made to date and acknowledge and thank our forebears for the legacy they left in advancing the work of the Council over previous decades. As Cardinal Brady reminded us

at Cardinal Cahal Daly's Requiem Mass in the New Year, *'we can't be Catholic or Protestant without an ecumenical spirit'*. That spirit inspires us to be signs of Christ's love in our ecumenical witness and leads us forward into the future with confidence and hope for renewal and reformation in church and community life.

This year, I am particularly grateful to all those who have served on the Council's Boards, Committees, working parties or for representing it elsewhere - their names are listed at the end of this report; to members of the Executive, the officeholders and Tony Davidson as President, for their gift of time and wisdom in exercising governance over the Council's diverse activities; to those Council delegates who have taken a day's annual leave in order to attend this AGM; and finally to my hardworking colleagues (Jennifer Fernandez and Rob Fairmichael in the Belfast office and Adrian Cristea and Philip McKinley in the Dublin office), who continue to animate this ministry.

Appreciation: Jennifer (ICC Administrator) left the Council in the New Year after serving the member churches since July 2008. She has used her skills and experience to transform our financial and book-keeping systems, as well as make endless contributions to the work way beyond the call of duty. Our sincere thanks to her. I am delighted to welcome Karen Kelly back into this role for the first three months in 2010 while future staffing needs are addressed.

Personal: It has been a huge privilege to serve the Council across these two very different jurisdictions for these past five and a half years. I'm pleased with the small but significant steps that we have been able to take together in advancing the mandate to make Christian unity more visible, but it will take time to fully absorb all that I've learnt from you here.

This month I tabled a report for ICC Executive and the Inter-Church Committee that traces the ecumenical journey that has been taken by the Irish churches during my 'watch' as General Secretary between 2004-2010. Called *'Just for the Record'*, it traces the initiatives, events, meetings, publications, visits and trips undertaken by Council representatives in strengthening ecumenical relationships on this island, as well as across the water and in Europe. It also offers some initial thoughts about some of the underlying trends that have driven these activities in witnessing to Christ's prayer to be one. Copies will be available at the AGM or from the office.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the diversity of this work which I've always seen as a vocational ministry that drew me from Aotearoa/ New Zealand in July 2004. I have met so many interesting people across this island and been inspired by many in positions of church leadership that emerged through the Troubles. I have discovered so many visible signs of Christian unity as we have worked together to witness

to Christ's love and service. Thank you for your support and encouragement, particularly in recent months since Anne died.

As I leave to return to our family home in Christchurch in February, you will stay close to my heart. I will follow your journey on the website with more than passing interest. I will pray that there will be many more 'awesome moments' that will witness to being the Body of Christ to the wider community in this beautiful island of God's creation (Luke 24.48).

May the wonderful words of this Communion hymn inspire our shared journey towards that open stretch of new motorway that ecumenical pilgrims yearn to know in their lifetime and sing in their hearts:

*One in Body, heart and mind.
We are one by love united.
Christ be love within this sign.
Shared for us as bread and wine.*

Michael Earle

General Secretary, ICC

Executive Secretary, IICC

January 20th 2010



IICC co-chairs Cardinal Sean Brady and Rev Tony Davidson with Michael Earle at his farewell celebration January 2010

**Overview of 2009 of inter-church ministry undertaken by
ICC staff/representatives**

January

Compiled Irish Ecumenical News # 52 with details of 50 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity services and events around the island

Preached Newtonbreda Presbyterian (Belfast)

Addressed Methodist Retired Ministers Fellowship (Belfast)

Hosted lunch for key Personal Assistants/Administrators from member churches

Greenhills Ecumenical Conference (Drogheda)

Holocaust Memorial Day (Ballymena)

Compiled Annual Report and year-end accounts

Organised ICC Board of Overseas Affairs seminar with Prof Malan Nel (S. Africa)

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI): meetings of the Trustees and

General Secretaries of the 4-Nations (London)

February

Clonard Fitzroy Fellowship on '*Social Housing: segregated or shared?*' (Belfast)

March

Ecumenical Church Loan Fund AGM (Belfast)

ICCSI co-sponsored conference with Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility on *Socially Responsible Religious Investment* (Dublin)

Irish Inter-Church Committee (Dundalk)

April

Irish Ecumenical News #53

Organised ICC Executive and AGM (Gracehill Moravian, Ballymena)

European National Council of Churches meeting (St Pölten, Austria)

Civic reception for Salvation Army Territorial Commander (Dublin)

May

Appointed Philip McKinley as IICC Ecumenical Officer based in Dublin

CTBI Senior Representatives Forum, AGM, Trustees and General Secretaries meetings (Cardiff)

Preached at Moravian Church (Belfast)

Irish School of Ecumenics (ISE) Trust Council (Belfast)

German Protestant Kirchentag (Bremen)

Dublin Council of Churches' Annual Forum Day (Dublin)

Salvation Army Congress Pentecost celebrations (Belfast)

Organised visit of Lutheran Brass Choir to St Peter's Catholic Cathedral, west Belfast

Edgehill/Mater Dei conference on *Reconciliation in Scripture and on the Street* (Dromantine)

Church of Ireland General Synod (Armagh)

June

Presbyterian Church General Assembly (Belfast)

Methodist Church Annual Conference (L/Derry)

Organised ICC reception in Dublin for His Grace Dr Matthews Mar Timotheos

(Metropolitan, Indian Orthodox Diocese of North America, UK and Western Europe)

Organised and spoke at AICCMR book launch of *'What the Bible says about the Stranger - Biblical perspectives on racism, migration, asylum and cross-community issue'* in Dublin and Belfast

Organised ICC Board of Overseas Affairs' Christian Zionism Conference in Belfast and Dublin

Organised Board of Overseas Affairs seminar with Prof Kihumbu Thairu from Kenya

Ecumenical service organised by South Belfast Clergy Fellowship re intimidation of Roma families

Glenstal Ecumenical Conference (nr Limerick)

July

Society of Friends Yearly Meeting (Dublin)

National Day of Commemoration (Dublin)

Conference of European Churches Assembly (Lyon, France)

August

ICC Executive and planning meeting (Dublin)

September

Irish Ecumenical News #54

Calvin Conference (Belfast)

CTBI Trustees, Extra General Meeting and General Secretaries meetings (London)

October

CTBI 4-nations conference on *'Churches and the Far Right'* (London)

CTBI 4-nations Women's Meeting (Perth)

Catholic Advisory Committee on Ecumenism (Dublin)

Christian Aid Ireland conference *'Poverty Over'* (Dromantine)

ICC Board of Overseas Affairs seminar with Rev Prof James Haire (Australia)

Association of Belvoir Churches (Belfast)

Fitzroy-Clonard Theological Conference on the Eucharist (Belfast)

Special Lutheran (NI) 25th anniversary service/booklet (Belfast)

US Ambassador lunch with Irish faith communities (Dublin)

NI Equality Commission meeting with Church leaders (Belfast)

Presbyterian Peacemaking Consultation (Lisburn)

CTBI Trustees (London)

Contributed to ISE seminar on *'Auditing Ireland's Religious Diversity'* (Belfast)

1st round table meeting with Irish-based Orthodox churches (Dublin)

November

ICC Executive (Dublin)

Organised Irish Inter-Church Meeting on Baptism (Dublin)

Organised ICC consultation on Ministerial health (Dromantine)

Irish School of Ecumenics Trust Council AGM (Dublin)

December

IICC meeting (Dundalk)

CTBI Networks Conference (High Leigh)

Christian Aid AGM (Lambeth Palace, London)

Christian Aid Ireland AGM (Balbriggan)

Irish School of Ecumenics Trust AGM (Dublin)

Dublin Council of Churches Advent Walk of Light (Dublin)

Ecumenical service in support of UN Climate Change Conference (Dublin)

Statistics

In the 12 months from January 2009, the three Council staff members in Belfast have

- serviced (administration and minutes) **39 ecumenical committee meetings** of the Council and various inter-church bodies (ICC Executive, ICC Officers' Group, ICC Board of Overseas Affairs, Irish Inter-Church Committee, Irish Inter-Church Meeting planning group, Joint Management Committee, Irish Inter-Church Committee on Social Issues, Steering Group for IICC Ecumenical Officer in the Republic of Ireland, All-Ireland Churches Consultative Meeting on Racism; Ecumenical Church Loan Fund), cf. 54 in 2008
- served as member of Methodist Church Reconciliation Project Advisory Group, Irish School of Ecumenics Trust Council, NI Good Relations Forum, Inter-Church Peace Project working group, and an informal Church Initiatives Group
- provided an ecumenical presence at **73 conferences/seminars** and events around the island and overseas, cf. 63 in 2008
- organised **13 open/invited ecumenical events** involving 410 people in both jurisdictions, cf. 6 events with 133 people in 2007
- updated ecumenical news and events on the website at www.irishchurches.org
- released **3 press statements** to the media (church and secular) cf. 3 in 2008

In addition

- Our colleagues **Adrian Cristea** (Project Officer, Parish-based Integration Project) and **Philip McKinley** (IICC Ecumenical Officer) addressed their specific work priorities during the year while representing the Irish Inter-Church Committee at many additional meetings, events and conferences with church, inter-church groups and secular bodies around the island

Terms of reference of IICC Forums (18 March 2009, IICC meeting)

(1) Theology Forum

The Theology Forum will create spaces for the Irish Inter-Church Meeting (IICM) and its member churches and associated bodies to dialogue on theological issues and concerns that:

- (a) advance ecumenical relationships between the member churches of IICM
- (b) resource the member churches with statements identifying the common ground and outstanding theological differences between the churches
- (c) relate to overcoming divisions and deepening the cause of Christian Unity
- (d) address the contemporary Irish context
- (e) address world wide trends in bilateral and multilateral dialogues
- (f) offer theological perspectives on issues referred by IICC or IICC's Forums

Method of Work

The Forum will seek to fulfil its function by selecting its priorities each year for IICC's approval; creating appropriate open ecumenical spaces to bring together those with expertise and concern around these priorities; and produce appropriately budgeted resources (in the form of reports, papers etc) for distribution to member churches and on the inter-church website. Meetings of the Forum will be held at least three times a year as determined by the group; will be the focus of one IICC meeting per year; and will be responsible to plan the programme for an IICM conference every third year.

(2) Church in Society Forum - *Irish Churches Collaborating on Social Issues* – Function of Forum

The Church in Society Forum (CSF) shall advise and support the Irish Inter-Church Meeting (IICM) and its member Churches and associated bodies on matters coming within the general area of “church in society” (including social, economic, environmental & public policy issues in either/both jurisdictions in Ireland; or internationally - including those EU matters which affect Ireland and have been authorised by IICC), seeking to promote a common Christian response to such matters.

The Forum is charged by IICM to endeavour to maximise joint approaches to relevant issues by the Member Churches, and as far as possible undertake collaborative or joint actions in furtherance of this

Method of Work

The Forum shall carry out its work utilising the expertise within the Forum as well as, where appropriate, resources made available by the IICM, the Irish Council of Churches (ICC), member churches or possibly elsewhere. It shall seek to fulfil its function by, in particular: -

- (a) Sharing of information and networking between the churches, and promoting cooperation, joint working or collaboration between the churches on topics or projects of relevance.
- (b) Reflection from a Christian perspective on social issues and the production of reports, discussion documents or other resource material, as well as other appropriate activities, including seminars, workshops or conferences
- (c) Promotion of information and education within the churches, and beyond, on the relevance and importance of the Christian message in relation to the topics being addressed, seeking thereby to be an effective resource to assist in the formation of member church positions and priorities.
- (d) Undertaking joint or collaborative projects or actions to raise awareness, generate resources etc within churches on relevant issues, at both local and/or national level. Issuing relevant reports and statements in these areas (as from the Forum not from the churches per se).

The above will be undertaken based on annual Action Plans, which will be submitted to the Irish Inter-Church Committee (IICC) before the end of the preceding year for approval.



Members of the ICC Executive Committee August 2009



Some delegates attending the IICM Study day on Baptism, November 2009



Philip McKinley, Jennifer Fernandez, Rob Fairmichael and Michael Earle (inter-church staff, summer 2009).



Dr Linda Gold from Trôcaire, keynote speaker addressing the ICC AGM, April 2009



A local school choir singing at the ICC AGM in Gracehill, Co. Antrim, April 2009



Members of the ICC Executive visiting the Romanian Orthodox Church in Dublin, November 2009



Guest speakers at Women's Link Fellowship Day 2009: Mrs Lynda Neilands and Pastor Corinna Diestelkamp (speakers) with Mrs Winnie Moffett (Chairperson)



Bishop Eamonn Walsh, Rob Fairmichael, Stella Obe and Prof Kieran O'Mahony OSA at the launch of "What the Bible says about the Stranger" – June 2009



IICC Co-chairs and Rev Donald Ker with Pastor Alex Alajiki (leader of Redeemed Christian Church of God in Dundalk) – June 2009



Metropolitan Dr Matthews Mar Timotheos (Indian Orthodox) with Gillian Kingston, Pastor Corinna Diestelkamp, Robert Cochran and Bishop Richard Clarke at Welcome Service in the Lutheran Church Dublin, June 2009.



Some attendees at the IICC round-table with African Pentecostal Leaders – June 2009



Pastor Corinna Diestelkamp presenting Michael Earle with a gift at his farewell celebration January 2010



Some gifts given to Michael Earle at his farewell celebration January 2010.



Bishop Trevor Williams and Rev Jan Mullin – AGM 2009



Church representatives attending the ICC Consultation on Ministerial Health, November 2009



Some members of the Ecumenical Church Loan Fund Committee –Hazel McMillan, Linda Hopley and Rob Fairmichael.

Canon Bob Fyffe (CTBI General Secretary) with Rev Tony Davidson and Bishop Richard Clarke at an ICC Executive meeting April 2009.



Robert Cochran and Adrian Cristea
(Parish-based Integration Project)

Prof Cecil McCullough, Rev Stephen Sizer (speaker), Rev Tony Davidson and Rev Jim Campbell at the Board of Overseas Affairs Christian Zionist Conference day - September 2009



Some members of the All-Ireland Churches Consultative Meeting on Racism (AICCMR) enjoying a summer barbeque.

ICC Board of Overseas Affairs



Rev Dr Jim Campbell (Moderator 2003-2010, Presbyterian)

Overseas issues have regularly dominated the news during 2009 and the Board has sought to keep up to date with developments and to share information, where appropriate with member denominations.

The conflict in **Sri Lanka** which it has monitored for many years came to a head in 2009 with the apparent routing of the Tamil Tigers. The situation still causes concern in that many Tamils, displaced by the final conflict, have still not been allowed to return to their homes and villages. There is need to monitor how these non-combatants are treated by the Sri Lankan government.

Sudan, which has been on the BOA agenda for many years, continues to cause concern and engenders a sense of helplessness among concerned Christians and others in Ireland and elsewhere. Darfur is no nearer a settlement and increased inter-tribal conflict in Southern Sudan is a major cause of concern.

The situation in the **Middle East** remains fluid and fragile. Prof Cecil McCullough who monitors developments in the region on behalf of the Board has found his work made immensely more difficult by the demise of the Middle East Forum of the CTBI. Fortunately an informal organisation of bodies interested in the area has been set up and it is hoped that it will become a strong effective organisation in 2010.

Changes in CTBI have also resulted in the break-up of the Global Mission Network. Paul Hoey who represented the Board on this organisation which was involved with wider mission issues is now the ICC representative on its broadly similar successor, the **Churches Network for Mission**. This new grouping is just in the “start-up” phase and it remains to be seen if it will be worthwhile being involved in it.

The Board has maintained very close relations with **Christian Aid** during 2009 and has been very impressed with its success in maintaining more or less the same level of financial support despite the dramatically deteriorating economic situation in Ireland during the year. The Board calls upon its member churches to encourage their members to redouble their efforts to support what is “our relief and development” organisation at this difficult time.

Structural changes within the Irish Churches have also been a concern during the year. The final decision of the **IICM** not to take the BOA into its structures has resulted in an internal review of the role of a continuing BOA within the ICC. Proposals will be put before the ICC Executive later in 2010.

As always the Board sought to provide a platform for international visitors to share their concerns with leaders of the Irish churches. Prof Malan Nel of Pretoria spoke of his work in training and resourcing pastors for many different challenges. Professor

Kihumbu Thairu, Vice-Chancellor of the Presbyterian University of East Africa, shared how he and others sought to bring an end to the inter-tribal killing after the most recent Kenyan elections. The Rev Professor James Haire, one of the leading ecumenical leaders in the Southern Hemisphere shared what was happening in the churches in Australia. He also gave a fascinating account of the relationship between Christianity and Islam in Indonesia where he is a regular visitor.

The principal **public events** organised by the Board during 2009 were the Study Days on Christian Zionism held in Belfast and Dublin. The lecturer was the Rev Stephen Sizer, leading British expert on the topic and author of "Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon" and "Zion's Christian Soldiers – The Bible, Israel and the Church". Both were well attended and positively enhanced the public profile of the Irish Council of Churches within the island of Ireland.

While changes will come to the Board during 2010, it remains committed to its core tasks of stimulating interest in international affairs, development issues, world mission and evangelism.

Inter-Church Committee on Social Issues (Church in Society Forum)



Robert Cochran (Chairperson 2002-2009)

A key goal for ICCSI/CSF is to foster the setting up, and then to act as the oversight committee for, ecumenical projects which address specific social issues. Its terms of reference were updated during the year, and it will start to operate under those from January 2010. This includes a name change to 'Church in Society Forum' in line with other committees. Associated with these changes, Robert Cochran co-pletes his term as Chair, with a new appointment to be nominated by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

Eco-Congregation Ireland (www.ecocongregationireland.org) arose from ICCSI's work and is managed by a group of key people with relevant responsibility within the participating churches (at present Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, Church of Ireland, Religious Society of Friends). ECI is working with the churches at both national and local level to deepen the awareness of a theology of creation as well as practical attention to environmental issues with church life. Many local churches are becoming involved, either formally or informally, with the scheme. The part-time communications officer who started work with ECI during 2008 continues to actively promote the work and message of ECI within the churches and beyond. As funding permits, it is hoped to continue this role on an on-going basis.

Also operating under the auspices of ICCSI is the **Parish-based Integration Project**, financially supported by the Office of the Minister for Integration in Dublin. This

project, which was scheduled to last for three years up to the end of 2009, will in practice run on for the first part of 2010, as funds remain to support that. Its website www.iccsi.ie has a large amount of relevant resource material for local church use. The resource booklet produced during 2008 continues to be widely disseminated and used in churches. Increasingly, as the project moves towards its conclusion, effort is being put in to seek to 'mainstream' the lessons and experience from the project throughout the churches and by liaising with key players in civil society (e.g. Dublin City Council's integration office). A key component of this activity has been the production, following wide consultation, of an ecumenical declaration, embodying ten key Affirmations (plus back-up support material). This has been endorsed by the Irish Inter-Church Meeting and the aim is to have this adopted by all the member churches and then be used by them as a framework to guide and inform the individual actions taken by each church as appropriate to their circumstances.

ICCSI continues to be interested in the question of socially **responsible investment**. It was one of the sponsoring bodies for the ECCR (Ecumenical Council on Corporate Responsibility) meeting in Dublin in March 2009, at which Robert Cochran presented a key-note paper (which is available on the ICC website). ECCR is hoping to be more active on the Irish Scene, and ICCSI is reflecting on the best way to maintain contact with that process.

Planning started during 2009 about the possibility of running a seminar during 2010 addressing issues around **Vision & Values in the Health** sector.

All-Ireland Churches Consultative Meeting On Racism



Dr Scott Boldt (convenor)

The AICCMR has a number of things to report for this year. Following the launch of the *Directory of Migrant-Led Churches and Chaplaincies* in Dublin and Belfast, the group has been active in disseminating this resource. This has been achieved by distributing the publications through church networks/events as well as to centres, agencies and organisations that would have direct contact with migrants. Moreover, the resource has been regularly updated and is available online and serves as a continuing resource for migrants and churches. Much consideration has been given to the inter-church implications of the directory. The AICCMR is in the process of planning for a conference and has been making contact with churches listed in the directory to identify issues/topics and elicit their views. We wish to report that funding for the reprinting, promotion and dissemination of the directory has come from the Department of Justice in Dublin and the Peace III European Regional Development Fund.

<http://www.irishchurches.org/files/DirectoryOfMigrantLedChurchesAndChaplaincies2009.pdf>

<http://www.edgehillcollege.org/Directory%20of%20Migrant%20Led%20Churches>

<http://www.embraceni.org/category/news/news/>

This year the AICCMR completed the preparation for the revision and the launches of the second edition of *'What the Bible says about the Stranger'*. As with the directory, there was a Belfast and Dublin launch, and the group has been working to promote this resource and ensure its wide usage. The events were well publicised and the resource has been promoted on a number of websites including the sample listed below.

<http://www.irishchurches.org/files/WhattheBiblesaysabouttheSTRANGER.pdf>

<http://www.kandle.ie/2009/06/11/what-bible-says-about-stranger/>

<http://www.eden.co.uk/shop/what-the-bible-says-about-the-stranger-2642203.html>

Members of the AICCMR have continued to serve in an advisory role for the Parish-based Integration Project. Furthermore, members of the AICCMR contributed to the meetings and drafting of the PIP Affirmations document.

<http://www.iccsi.ie/>

The AICCMR regularly considers, discerns and discusses its role and future in the light of inter-church needs and issues. We were delighted to welcome a number of new participants to the group. These include Denise Wright (ICC representative on CTBI's Churches Racial Justice Network), Rev John Stephens (Dublin Central Mission Methodist Church) and Olive Hobson (Quaker House Belfast). We look ahead to 2010 with anticipation and hope.

CTBI Churches Network for Mission



Rev Paul Hoey (Church of Ireland) 2008-2010

The Network formally altered its name from Global Mission Network to the Churches Network for Mission and the number of meetings cut to two per year. Janice Price stepped down as Chief Executive of the Network in March 2009. There was just one meeting in 2009, in October. A previous one planned for June had to be cancelled due to small numbers attending.

The following issues were discussed:

1. Role of the Network

- This forum is the only place where we can hear views from across the denominations and nations and where we can talk, share and think together. We need that challenge to our own views.
- Mission agencies/departments do meet to discuss issues but usually these are very focussed discussions. Because of reductions in staff

and increased workloads, previously regular bi-lateral meetings no longer take place.

- We need a space where we can reflect theologically with those whose views are different to our own.
- We need to identify relevant topics for discussion – issues of mutual interest and concern across the Network.
- Issues, events, discussions in CTBI are no longer restricted to or seen as the property of one Network. Although one Network may identify a topic and run with it, the input and perspective of the other Networks is essential for a balanced/valuable debate.
- What are the issues/the World Church issues; how can they be identified; and what is the mechanism for doing so?

The Forum should be a place where we can listen to each other's stories. The story from one Church will lead to reflection by other Network members on how that story impacts on their own interpretation of mission today.

2. Four Nations Task Group on Israel/ Palestine

A conference is planned for 2010 to help the Churches in these four nations to engage with the issues around the conflict in Israel/Palestine, and support the Churches in this task. The purpose of the conference/event will be to provide an opportunity to hear different voices and to get a clearer idea of the mind of the Churches and consequently how best to support them.

CTBI is also to organise a visit of Church representatives from Britain and Ireland to the Gulf. The purpose would be for Churches to gain a broader view of the Middle East beyond Israel/ Palestine; to appreciate the wider context of the Israel/Palestine conflict; to meet Church leaders in the various Gulf states and to hear from the Churches in Iran and Iraq.

Christian Aid Ireland



Margaret Boden, CEO

Three new Board members were elected to the Republic of Ireland Board at the beginning of 2009. They were Mrs Bet Aalen, Revd Sonia Hicks and Mr. Denis Poynton. Mrs Gillian Kingston was elected to the Northern Ireland Board, and her role as Vice Chair was confirmed. The two Boards (Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland) continued to meet as one, chaired by the Revd Dr Roger Purce.

Christian Aid continued implementing its Corporate Strategy of *“Turning Hope into Action”* within which major pieces of work such as Secure Livelihoods; Economic Justice; Accountable Governance; HIV and AIDS; Strengthening the Movement for global

justice and Strengthening the Organisation are the drivers. The first Christian Aid Ireland Annual Report for 07/08 reflected this and made clear by examples what each section meant.

The campaign for tax justice attracted media attention. Christian Aid's wide ranging reports on the way in which poorer countries are deprived of revenue through tax dodges, also touched on the ways in which the very rich use tax havens to avoid paying tax.

During 2009 the launch of 'Poverty Over' – a vision for a world without poverty – was marked by a conference in Dromantine with key note addresses from Professor James Haire, Professor of Theology, Charles Sturt University, Canberra, Australia; Executive Director, Australian Christianity and Culture and Director, Public and Contextual Theology Strategic Research Centre (PACT) and from Paul Valentin, International Director of Christian Aid. Both presentations are available from Christian Aid Ireland Belfast or Dublin offices, as is Christian Aid's 'Poverty Over' report.

Despite a turbulent year in terms of economic recession and a swingeing 22% cut to Irish Aid funding, which will affect Christian Aid's international work during its 2009/10 financial year, generous support from Christian Aid's member Churches, supporter network and Irish Aid produced £6.6K/ 8.1K in 2008/09 for our work. There was also a ground swell of support for our campaign to persuade the Irish government not to implement further cuts as they were already impacting our work in the seven countries supported by Irish government funding, namely Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Burundi, Afghanistan, Colombia, Angola and Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The Belfast office will be moving to a new location at the end of January 2010. Following a request for a substantial rent increase in Wellington Park, it was decided to move to less expensive modern premises with easy access. Our new address will be Linden House, 96 Beechill Business Park, Beechill Road, Belfast BT8 7QN.

WOMEN'S LINK REPORT TO ICC 2009



Joyce Bond (Hon Secretary)

Our committee meetings were held in Belfast (I.C.C. Office) and Dublin (Lutheran Church) under the chairmanship of Mrs Winnie Moffett, President Women's Link.

The **Fellowship Day** 2009 was held in Edenderry Methodist Church, Portadown, and our theme was '*The Challenge of Change – My Story*'. Speakers were Pastor Corrina Diestelkamp (Lutheran Church – Dublin) and Mrs Lynda Neilands (Belfast).

Pastor Corrina spoke of the challenge of change in her life as a child in Germany living in a divided society and of her student years. She spoke of her happy family life and her ministry shared with her husband Pastor Joachim in the Lutheran Church (Dublin) and throughout Ireland.

Mrs Lynda Neilands addressed our theme under a number of headings and in particular 'Seasoned by Scripture'. In discussion groups, she encouraged us to share stories of love in action; how God has spoken to us through Scripture; to share stories of God's perfect timing and we ended in prayer sharing requests for people held captive in many ways in society. Lynda's talents as an author have enabled her to share communication skills with old and young and her books have been a source of encouragement to many people.

Mrs Marian Woods retired from our committee in May 2009. Marian served faithfully in many roles - as Editor of Newslink, President and as Executive member (Women's Link) on the ICC Committee.

The 4 Nations Women's Concerns Meeting was held at The Bield, Blackruthven, near Perth in Scotland, in October providing an opportunity to share news of activities given by Cytûn (Wales), ACTS (Scotland) CTE (England) and Women's Link (Ireland) and to elect administrators for The Pauline Webb Fund. Ireland has been invited to host the next meeting.

There were many events in our organisations throughout the year. In the Republic of Ireland, 75 Years of World Day of Prayer (1934 - 2009) was celebrated on Saturday 5th September in St Patrick's College, Drumcondra. Representatives from eight denominations participated in the service. Greetings were brought by the Chairperson of the World Committee. A special booklet of prayers was prepared for this event.

Our committee records grateful thanks to ICC for their support and to Mr Michael Earle, General Secretary. The committee extended sympathy to Mr Michael Earle and his family on the passing of his wife Anne.

Committee Members 2009:

Mrs Winnie Moffett (Chairperson; Presbyterian Women)
Mrs Roberta Thompson (Former President; Moravian Women's Association)
Mrs Joyce Bond (Hon. Secretary; Mothers' Union)
Mrs Phyllis Watters (Hon. Treasurer; Methodist Women Ireland)
Mrs Marian Woods (retired May) (Moravian Women's Association)
Mrs Violet O'Mullan (Non Subscribing Presbyterian Church Women's League)
Ms Olive Hobson (Society of Friends)
Ms Gill Ronayne (Society of Friends)
Ms Brigitte Riedel McGarry (Lutheran Church)
Mrs Margie Savage (Women's World Day of Prayer N.I.)
Mrs Eilis O'Malley (World Day of Prayer R.I.)
Capt Miriam Irwin (Salvation Army)

Honorary Treasurer's report to AGM 2010



Robert Cochran

Changes

I was asked to take over this role in the middle of the year, and agreed with some reluctance. One of my concerns was the ability to effectively undertake the task while based in Dublin. This complication was compounded by the resignation of both Jennifer Fernandez and Michael Earle. I wish to thank them for their support and assistance. The silver lining to this dark cloud however has been the return of Karen Kelly as office administrator. We are very fortunate that she was available just as we needed to fill that post. For my perspective in particular, it is very beneficial to have a person in place who I know and with whom I already have had a good working relationship, and who has been able to 'hit the ground running' because of her past experience with us.

2. Finance Structures

Since taking over as Hon. Treasurer, I have been working with the Inter-Church Centre staff to seek to streamline a number of aspects of the financial management. In particular:-

Bank Accounts: For what were, historically, very good reasons, ICC has had in recent years a very large numbers of bank accounts. These have now been rationalised into the smallest necessary number. In addition, these are all in the same bank for convenience, and based in a branch just down the road from the Inter-Church Centre.

Accounts Structure: In addition, the structure of the accounts in our book keeping software has also been streamlined, and simplified, and is more in line with modern good accounting practice. Associated with this is the ability for more effective budgeting.

Auditors: It has been my opinion that it is not the best approach for a small organisation such as ours to use one of the large firms of auditors – who are better set up to handle large corporate clients. We are therefore bringing a resolution to this AGM to change to a smaller firm who is more suited to our needs.

3. Financial Situation

As everyone is aware, society is going through a very difficult economic situation. ICC is not immune to this either. Our attempts to sell 48 Elmwood Avenue have failed, and the property has been taken off the market for the moment. Our annual outgoings exceed the income from the member churches, and so we are gradually eating into our reserves. This therefore raises a warning flag for the future, but also restricts our ability to

fund desirable special projects. But we cannot just raise member subscriptions sufficiently, since many member churches are also facing their own financial constraints.

All of this means that we need to find ways of undertaking the necessary work in as cost – effective manner as possible. This will inevitably over time mean cutting some costs and/or finding additional sources of income

Other issues to be faced in the near future include the coming into operation of the Charities Act (and before too long, the equivalent Act in the South). While not in itself too complex, it raises a number of issues, for example should we remain as just one registered charity, and should it still be ICC? Or should there be two or three (ICC, IICC, Inter-Church Centre) registered charities?

As I write, the 2009 accounts are with the auditors, and will be presented to the AGM.

Robert Cochran 4 February 2010



Philip McKinley, Rob Fairmichael, Karen Kelly, Adrian Cristea and Michael Earle (inter-church staff, January 2010)

MEMBERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION

(At January 2010)

COUNCIL MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE MEMBER CHURCHES

Ex-Officio Members of Council (Church Leaders)

Church of Ireland	Most Rev Dr Alan Harper
Presbyterian Church in Ireland	Rt Rev Dr Stafford Carson
Methodist Church in Ireland	Rev Donald Ker
Moravian Church (Irish District)	Mr Derick Woods
Non-Subscribing Church in Ireland	Rt Rev Robert McKee
Religious Society of Friends	Mr Alan Pim
Salvation Army	Major Alan Watters

Antiochian Orthodox Church

Rev Fr Irenaeus du Plessis	Rev Fr David Lonergan
Rev Dn Paul Totten	

Church of Ireland

Mr Gareth Casey	Most Rev Richard Clarke
Rev Canon Dr Ian Ellis	Rev Canon Raymond Fox
Rev Canon Mark Gardner	Ms Ruth Handy
Mr Sam Harper	Rev Canon E J Harris
Rev Canon Walter Lewis	Rev MWJ Loney
Mr Jim McGaffin	Mrs Roberta McKelvey
Dr Kenneth Milne	Mr W Trevor Morrow
Most Rev Dr John Neill	Rev Daniel Nuzum
Rev TDB Pierce	Rev Obinna Ulogwara
Rev Canon Trevor Williams	Ms Uta Raab

Greek Orthodox Church in Britain and Ireland

Fr Thomas Carroll

LifeLink Network of Churches

Mr Andrew McCourt	Pastor Paul Reid
Mrs Denise Wright	

Lutheran Church in Ireland

Pastor Corinna Diestelkamp	Mr Peter Slovak
Mr Martin Sauter	

Methodist Church in Ireland

Mr Robert Cochran
Mr David English
Mrs Laura Griffith
Ms Gillian Kingston
Rev Janet Unsworth

Rev Andrew Dougherty
Rev Geraldine Gracie
Rev Elizabeth Hewitt
Miss Frances Moffitt
Mr Tom Wilson

Moravian Church Irish District

Rev Paul Holdsworth
Mrs Marian Woods

Rev Jan Mullin

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Rev Colin Campbell
Rev Sandra Wilson

Rev Chris Wilson

Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Mrs Dorothy Beattie
Rev Alan Boal
Rev Denis Campbell
Mr Lindsay Conway, OBE
Mrs Helen Freeburn
Rev Mary Hunter
Rev Lorraine Kennedy-Ritchie
Rev Alan Martin
Mr James Patterson
Rev Dr Donald Watts

Mr James Beattie
Rev John Brackenridge
Rev Dr S Jim Campbell
Rev Tony Davidson
Mr James Gregg
Rev Chris Kennedy
Rev David Knox
Rev David Nesbitt
Rev Dr Allen Sleith

Religious Society of Friends

Susan H Pim
Dr David Poole

Eleanor Gaw

Rock of Ages Cherubim & Seraphim Church

Mother Agnes Aderanti
Senior Mother in Israel, Victoria Sangolana

Most Senior Apostle
Olusola Obube

Romanian Orthodox Church in Ireland

Rev Fr Godfrey O'Donnell

Russian Orthodox Church in Ireland

Deacon Nikolay Evseev
Rev Fr George Zavershinsky

Mr Stanislav Naspanyy

Salvation Army (Irish District)

Mrs Iris Corry

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2009

President

Rev Tony Davidson

Vice- President

Most Rev Richard Clarke

Hon Treasurer

Mr Robert Cochran

Executive Secretary

Mr Michael Earle

Antiochian Orthodox Church

Rev Fr Irenaeus du Plessis

Church of Ireland

Rev Canon Raymond Fox
Rt Rev Trevor Williams

Rev Daniel Nuzum

Greek Orthodox Church in Britain & Ireland

Fr Thomas Carroll

LifeLink Network of Churches

Mrs Denise Wright

Lutheran Church in Ireland

Pastor Corinna Diestelkamp

Methodist Church in Ireland

Rev Donald Ker

Mr Robert Cochran

Moravian Church Irish District

Mr Derick Woods

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church

Rev Colin Campbell

Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Rev John Brackenridge

Rev Lorraine Kennedy-Ritchie

Rev Dr Donald Watts

Religious Society of Friends

Dr David Poole

Rock of Ages Cherubim and Seraphim Church

Deacon Stella Obafemi-Akodu

Romanian Orthodox Church in Ireland

Rev Fr Godfrey O'Donnell

Russian Orthodox Church in Ireland

Rev Fr George Zavershinsky

Salvation Army (Irish District)

Major Alan Watters

Co-opted

Mrs Roberta McKelvey

(Co-opted until AGM 2010)

Mrs Marian Woods

(Co-opted until AGM 2010)

Ex Officio

Rev Dr S Jim Campbell (PCI)

(Moderator of Board of Overseas Affairs)

JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Roman Catholic Church

Mr Eamonn Fleming KCSG *(IICM Hon Treasurer)*

Rev Dr Tom Norris

Very Rev Colm McGrady

Irish Council of Churches

Rev Tony Davidson

Mr Robert Cochran *(ICC Hon Treasurer)*

Most Rev Richard Clarke

Co-opted

Rev Donald Ker

Mr Michael Earle *(General Secretary)*

Rev Dr Donald Watts

BOARD OF OVERSEAS AFFAIRS (BOA)

Moderator:

Rev S Jim Campbell (*Moderator 2003 – 2010*)

Church of Ireland

Rev Canon John Mayes

Dr Kenneth Milne

Lutheran Church

Pastor Corinna Diestelkamp

Methodist Church

Mr Tim Dunwoody/

Rev Sonia Hicks

Ms Eunice Crawford

Miss Frances Moffitt

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church

Rev Colin Campbell

Presbyterian Church

Rev Bob Cobain

Ms Valerie Steele

Rev Dr Donald Watts

Rev Colin McClure (Deputy Moderator)

Mrs E Pat Crossley

Co-opted

Rev Wesley Campbell

Mr Brian Lavery

Prof J Cecil McCullough

Mrs Margaret Boden

Rev Paul Hoey

Rev Uel Marrs

Rev Terry McMullan

Secretary

Mr Rob Fairmichael

IRISH INTER-CHURCH COMMITTEE

Office-bearers

Cardinal Seán Brady

(Co-chair)

Rev Dr Tom Norris

(Joint Secretary)

Mr Eamonn Fleming KCSG

(Treasurer)

Rev Tony Davidson

(Co-chair)

Most Rev Richard Clarke

(Joint Secretary)

Roman Catholic

Most Rev Dr Diarmuid Martin

Most Rev Dr Anthony Farquhar

Rev Prof Brendan Leahy

Most Rev Dr Gerard Clifford

Most Rev Dr John McAreavey

Very Rev Kieran McDermott

Church of Ireland

Rev Canon Ian Ellis

Methodist Church

Rev Donald Ker

Rev Elizabeth Hewitt

Presbyterian Church

Rev Dr Donald Watts

Rev Gabrielle Farquhar

Salvation Army (Ireland Division)

(Representing smaller churches since 2008)

Major David Jackson/ Major Alan Watters

Romanian Orthodox Church

(Representing 4 Orthodox churches since 2006)

Rev Fr Godfrey O'Donnell

Inter-Church Committee on Social Issues

Mr Robert Cochran *(Chair)*

Co-Moderator of IICC Theology Forum

Ms Gillian Kingston

Executive Secretary

Mr Michael Earle

CHURCH IN SOCIETY FORUM

(Until End 2009: Inter-Church Committee on Social Issues/ ICCSI)

Chairperson

Ms Eileen Gallagher

Roman Catholic

Rev Tim Bartlett

Mr Patrick Durkan

Rev Eamon McDevitt

Sr Joan Roddy

Ms Margaret Burns

Sr Carina Muldoon

Ms Nicola Rooney

Church of Ireland

Mr W Trevor Morrow

Mr Ian Slaine

Lutheran Church

Pastor Corinna Diestelkamp

Methodist Church

Rev David Clements

Mr Robert Cochran

Presbyterian Church

Mr Lindsay Conway, OBE

Mrs E Pat Crossley

Religious Society of Friends

Terry Gillespie

Salvation Army (Ireland Division)

Major Alan Watters

ICC Staff

Adrian Cristea

Rob Fairmichael

(Parish-based Integration Project)

ALL IRELAND CHURCHES' CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON RACISM (AICCMR)

Chairperson:

Dr Scott Boldt *(since 2007)*

Fr Donal Bennett

Ms Olive Hobson

Rev Alan Martin

Sr. Joan Roddy

Sr Brighde Vallely

Mr Robert Cochran

Rev Richard Kerr

Mr Philip McKinley

Rev John Stephens

Mrs Denise Wright

ICC Staff

Rob Fairmichael

ADVISORY GROUP – PARISH-BASED INTEGRATION PROJECT (PIP)

Robert Cochran (Methodist)

Rev Alan Martin (Presbyterian)

Sr Joan Roddy (Roman Catholic)

IRISH ECUMENICAL CHURCH LOAN FUND (ECLOF)

Mrs Linda Hopley (Chairperson)

Mr Eamonn Fleming KCSG

Mr Rob Fairmichael (ICC Staff)

Ms Hazel McMillan (Treasurer)

Mr Michael Earle (ICC Staff)

COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Church of Ireland General Synod 2009

Rev Tony Davidson (*Presbyterian*)

Methodist Annual Conference 2009

Pastor Corinna Diestelkamp (*Lutheran*)

Presbyterian General Assembly 2009

Fr Irenaeus du Plessis (*Antiochian Orthodox*)

Society of Friends Yearly Meeting 2009

Mr Robert Cochran (*Methodist*)

Conference of European Churches

Mr Robert Cochran (*Methodist*)

Church in Society Commission

(2006-2010)

Conference of European Churches

Bishop Richard Clarke (*C of I*)

13th Assembly (July 2009)

Christian Aid Ireland Board:

Roberta McKelvey (*C of I*)

**Churches Community Work Alliance
Board**

Rev Colin Campbell (*NSPCI*) (2007-2010)

EMBRACE (NI)

Mrs Denise Wright (*LifeLink*) Vice- Chair (since 2004)

(*Christians Working with Asylum Seekers, Refugees*)

Kirchentag (May 2009) Germany

Rev Colin Campbell (*NSPCI*)

Douglas Anderson (*Presbyterian*)

NI Dept of Health Regional Equality Liaison Panel (RELP)

Rev Dr Wesley Blair (*MCI*)

(2005-2009)

OFMDFM Race Equality Forum

Mrs Denise Wright (*LifeLink*) (since 2006)

**Representing Smaller ICC Churches on
IICC**

Major David Jackson (*Salvation Army*) 2008-2009

CTBI Networks

**Churches Inter-Religious Network
2008-2011**

Norman Richardson (*Presbyterian*)

Global Mission Network 2008 - 2010

Rev Canon Paul Hoey (*C of I*)

Churches' Racial Justice Network

Mrs Denise Wright (*LifeLink*)
Sr Joan Roddy (*Catholic*)

CTBI International Students Network

Rev John Marchant (*C of I*)

CTBI Editorial Group for Week of

Very Rev Kieran McDermott (*Catholic*),

Prayer for Christian Unity 2009-2012

Rev Dr Allen Sleith (*Presbyterian*)

CTBI International Affairs' Liaison Committee

Rev Colin McClure (*2007-2010*)

CTBI Trustees

Ms Gillian Kingston (*Methodist*)
Rev John Brackenridge (*PCI*) (*alternate*)

ICC SECRETARIAT

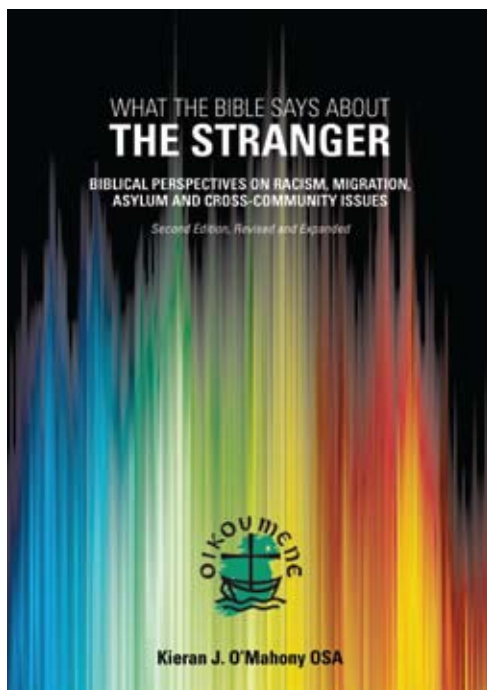
**General Secretary
Associate Secretary
Administrator**

Michael Earle
Rob Fairmichael
Jennifer Fernandez

**GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND OTHER ABBREVIATIONS USED IN
THE COUNCIL'S WORK**

AGM	Annual General Meeting
ACTS	Action of Churches Together in Scotland
AICCMR	All-Ireland Churches Consultative Meeting on Racism
BOA	Board of Overseas Affairs (ICC)
C of I	Church of Ireland
CEC	Conference of European Churches
CTE	Churches Together in England
CTBI	Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
Cytûn	Churches Together in Wales
ECI	Eco-Congregation Ireland
ECLOF	Irish Ecumenical Church Loan Fund
ICC	Irish Council of Churches
ICPP	Inter-Church Peace Programme
ICCSI	Inter Church Committee on Social Issues (IICM)
IES	Irish Episcopal/Bishops' Conference (RC)
IICC	Irish Inter-Church Committee
IICM	Irish Inter-Church Meeting
IEN	Irish Ecumenical News (ICC)
ISE	Irish School of Ecumenics
MCI	Methodist Church in Ireland
NSPCI	Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church in Ireland
OFMDFM	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
PCI	Presbyterian Church in Ireland
PIP	Parish-based Integration Programme
PP	Parish Priest
RC	Roman Catholic Church in Ireland
WCC	World Council of Churches

Publications 2010



“What the Bible says about the Stranger”

Biblical Perspectives on Racism,
Migration, Asylum and
Cross-Community Issues

Available online at
www.irishchurches.org