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Corrymeela



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Appealing news for donors

EVERYONE AT CORRYMEELA is grateful to our magazine readers for their part in funding our work, especially in response to appeals that are sent to them directly. As a fundraiser I am conscious that to be chosen as worthy of a donation by someone is an honour and something to be cherished, and we don't always say 'thank you' enough. I never forget that you each face many worthy charitable choices for your gift and by continuing to support us we gain not only the much-needed funds to operate but we also gain hope and encouragement for our task here in Northern Ireland.

For many it is not possible to visit Corrymeela in person to see our activities first-hand but hopefully through this magazine we are able to bring Corrymeela to you. It is because of your help that we are there at times of need, to listen and to understand, to reach out with the hand of friendship, to be a peacemaker. Together we make Corrymeela the wonderful life-changing place it is for so many of our participants. Thank you for choosing us.

Our Volunteer Appeal is still underway with just over £8,000 in so far. Our experience has shown that it is very difficult to obtain funding from trusts or grant-makers which makes the donations from individuals all the more crucial to cover the meals and small stipend required. On a positive note the money received so far will cover the costs of one of our long-term volunteers for an entire year. I hope you enjoy reading all about this year's new, bright and energetic volunteers in this issue.

The Summer Appeal to support our family and children's programme raised just over £20,000 and helped fund those many families who could not have come to Corrymeela for a respite break without

this help. Having seen for myself the smiling faces and loud chatter of children at the Centre with their eagerness to plan another visit, your donation gives light to their life at a time when there may be little to enjoy, due to health problems or other family hardships. On pages 28 to 29 you will gain a glimpse of what these gifts have achieved.

Our Green Appeal to support our purchase of solar panels has raised £16,000 to enable us to move ahead with their installation during the final phase of building our volunteer accommodation called 'Coventry'. With a house full of young people I am sure that the economical hot water generated will be in great demand and a daily reminder of your help. For our latest pictures of this build see our News section.

It has been my pleasure to welcome back since April Ada Ketchie in a volunteer role as Communications Assistant Editor. She has proved an invaluable resource of energy and enthusiasm with a flair for creativity.



Ada has done a sterling job taking ideas, news, suggestions and articles, and turning them into a terrific read. I hope you enjoy this issue and find our stories of peacemaking at home and throughout the world as inspirational as I did.

With best wishes

Jo Watson
Editor/Fundraising Director

Hope and history rhyming

THE US ELECTION will be with us in November. Elections are often competitions between hope and fear – with fear usually winning. Sometimes, however, we surprise ourselves. To elect Barack Obama would be to rectify – a little – the deep wrongs of American history. It would be an act of redemptive politics; it would be to do hope. Such an act would show that America, for all its deep flaws, is actually a special country.

Of course, it may not happen and, if it does, Obama may not be a good president. Moreover, hard choices and political realities – over Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, international terrorism, etc. – are not suspended. And people who have to bear the burden – and the curse – of hope have a harder time. Sometimes it is only the conservative who can do the difficult thing, like Nixon over China. But perhaps, even if Obama is not elected, something will have changed in American life.

Donald Shriver – the American ethicist – spoke at our Summer Festival in June. In his magisterial books on forgiveness and repentance – understood politically – he exemplifies a tough-minded and

realistic hopefulness about politics; about politics as human possibility. He has explored the dark side of America – in its racism and injustice. He has also explored the bright side – the people who showed courage, the people, often faith-based, who moved politics in a more benign and inclusive direction.

We need that vision of politics in Northern Ireland – we can do better than what we have currently got. The setting up of Corrymeela in the 1960s was an expression of a wish that we could do better – religiously, politically. We are where we are now – in a sort of peace. But we can be a better country than this – we can have the audacity to hope.

This up to now has been a mean and dishonest decade in American history; of a society brought low by torture, encouraged and enabled from the top – a Presidency with aspirations to be faith-based but now summed up and damned by the Orwellian phrase ‘extraordinary rendition’. America is a better country than this and has an opportunity to be again.



David Stevens is the Leader of the Corrymeela Community



Lets hear what some of our readers think...

I have received this magazine in all its many forms over many years and thoroughly enjoy all the articles etc. therein. I often feel quite challenged and encouraged in my own faith journey by the opinions expressed, for which I thank you!

Patricia Farr, Manchester

I finally plucked up the courage to tackle my desk and discovered that the latest Corrymeela magazine had arrived while I was away. Really outstanding. It keeps getting better. The layout and quality of the photographs were excellent. I am looking forward to a good read. Keep up the good work. Peace and Blessings,

Marian Brady, Ballycastle

Greetings. While I want to express how much I enjoy receiving the magazine, I also want to mention a bit in regard to the 'CarbonNeutral' banner placed near the bottom of the Corrymeela magazine front cover. It has come to my attention that while I have a good idea what 'CarbonNeutral' means, others may not know, and thus it would be my recommendation to explain the nature of this statement to the readership. Thank you very much,

Noel Stuart, Cornwall

Noel, thank you very much for your thoughtful consideration towards our other readers. Our first CarbonNeutral Corrymeela was published back in July 2007, so it has been some time since

we explained what this meant. To clarify, 'CarbonNeutral' means that we agree to pay a small premium on our printing costs to cover the carbon emissions produced during the manufacturing and shipping of the paper used in the production of this magazine. The remaining emissions are covered by our printer, GPS Colour Graphics, in which they support a variety of forestry and energy efficiency projects which save equivalent amounts of CO2.
- Ed.

I have read Corrymeela magazine for probably 30 years and have always enjoyed it. I have a request - to hear more about people in Northern Ireland who are contributing to the often difficult work of getting people to live peaceably together and to those connected to them around the world.

Denise Brady, London

Dear Denise, thank you for your letter (room for only a small

excerpt here) it was full of really useful constructive points which hopefully are reflected in this and future issues. Our underlying theme this issue is peacemakers and we sincerely hope this will be a good starting point in response to your suggestions. - Ed.

Jo & Ada say

Calling all former Corrymeela volunteers! We want to know where you are now and what you are doing in your lives as we would love to compile a 'where are they now' article. Please get in touch via email or letter and let us know your story. It would be perfect if you could include a photograph of you when you were at Corrymeela and a recent photo. We look forward to hearing from you and seeing the changing hairstyles.

Corrymeela Christmas Cards

WHAT BETTER WAY to send Christmas greetings and support Corrymeela than sending Corrymeela Christmas cards this year. There are six designs to choose from and all cards come in packs of 10 complete with envelopes. Simply complete and return the order form with your payment to the Corrymeela Belfast office.



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Learning at Lambeth Conference

COMMUNITY MEMBER and Community Relations Consultant Yvonne Naylor attended the Lambeth Conference at the University of Kent in July. This annual conference highlighted a number of issues including reconciliation, diversity, forgiveness, and understanding conflict.

The conference offered many opportunities to share stories, reflect and build community. Plenary sessions included Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sachs who spoke on 'competing with' and 'co-operating with' difference. Co-operation, he proposed, was the more creative path.

Bishops and Church Leaders of the Anglican

Church of Canada led the Eucharist. This illustrated unity in difference by sharing stories of conflict, forgiveness and reconciliation throughout Canada.

Participants also contributed to the conference. Yvonne for her part demonstrated the art of puppetry as a means to highlight the issues raised. To thank their hosts women from a number of African countries used dance and songs of praise to God as an example of diversity and inclusion.

For more information about this interesting conference contact Yvonne directly on yvonne.naylor@ntlworld.com



Corrymeela FC, hosts and runners-up in their 20th Anniversary tournament

Congratulations on 20 years of Corrymeela football

CORRYMEELA FOOTBALL CLUB celebrated their 20th Anniversary season with an eight-team tournament backed by Belfast City Council's Support for Sport programme.

Taking part were the Corrymeela FC 1st and 2nd teams, SG Gries / Börsborn from Germany, Highlands FC from Edinburgh, Killowen Celtic from Rostrevor, Vision Athletic from South Belfast, St Theresa's from West Belfast and IFA-backed World United, a team consisting of players from a number of different countries who now reside in Northern Ireland.

Held over two days, teams divided into two groups of four for the preliminary stage with the winners and runners-up progressing to the Cup and the 3rd- and 4th-placed teams contesting the Shield.

Day 2 saw St Theresa's and SG Gries / Börsborn progress to the Shield final where the West Belfast outfit ran out comfortable 3-0 winners. World United and Corrymeela FC progressed

to the final of the Cup where a refreshed World squad overcame a very tired Corrymeela FC 3-1.

IFA Head of Community Relations, Michael Boyd, who was Caretaker Manager for World United praised Corrymeela for organising a superb tournament. 'Corrymeela Football Club has a clear commitment to the promotion of positive Community Relations through football and it was an honour for our World United football team to take part in this prestigious football tournament which celebrates the 20th Anniversary of this great club, who value friendship, respect and diversity as central to their club ethos. Our World United team shares this ethos with Corrymeela supporting both cross-community and intercultural development, with local players from Northern Ireland playing alongside players from a diverse wealth of nationalities, all united in friendship and respect through football.'



Yvonne and friends. To see more visit www.puppetwoman.org

Eco-bonfires: a beacon of hope

THIS PAST JULY, as part of Belfast City Council's Bonfire Management Programme, the community of Woodvale in Belfast developed a groundbreaking initiative on the issue of 11 July bonfires. For the first time, the community used a newly designed beacon to replace the traditional bonfires that had previously been built on the roads within the streets of Woodvale. The beacon structure is set on a bed of sand and is composed of a metal frame that contains wooden pallets. The top section of the structure is comprised of willow wood

chippings. The fuel therefore is carbon neutral and the structure doesn't cause any damage to the surface on which it is placed.

The bonfire beacon is an attempt by the Woodvale community to find new ways to celebrate the significance of the occasion in a more family friendly and environmentally sound way.

Many councils across Northern Ireland run bonfire management programmes, offering financial support to communities to celebrate their cultural heritage in a more positive manner. Bonfire management programmes



Woodvale beacon on 11 July 2008

have the backing of a number of agencies including the Police and the Fire and Rescue Service, who all report that better bonfire management plays a major role in fostering greater community safety on what is traditionally one of their busiest nights of the year.

Members of parliament and prominent Protestant leaders have backed the eco-friendly initiative. While beacons are still but a budding proposition throughout Northern Ireland, the Council's hope is that Woodvale's example will catch fire in the years to come.



Paula, Gerry, Angila and Jackie pose for peace

Launch of NI's First Peace Day Campaign

THIS YEAR Springboard Opportunities Ltd has embarked on a campaign to raise awareness of the United Nations International Day of Peace; a day to celebrate peacebuilding locally and encourage 24-hour ceasefires in conflicts internationally.

The campaign was officially launched by Junior Minister of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister Gerry Kelly MLA, in

the Long Gallery, Stormont on 17 September 2008.

Inspired by Jeremy Gilley's personal drive and determination through his Peace One Day organisation, coupled with Springboard's desire to contribute to reconciliation and a sustainable peace, Springboard have launched a local campaign to increase public and civic observance of this

international day of ceasefire and non-violence.

The campaign aims to raise awareness of the origins of Peace Day and engage all sectors of society in observance of the International Day of Peace on 21 September each year.

Proving a huge success, the campaign's celebrations of peace filled Belfast's Oh Yeah Music Centre on 21 September. There was

a variety of entertainment and musical performances as well as DJ master classes, a Chinese dragon dance, bouncy castle, face painting and arts and crafts.

Want to make a commitment to raise awareness and mark next year's International Day of Peace? Get involved at www.peacedaycampaign.com

Double celebration for former Corrymeela Centre Director



where he met his wife Clodagh, the daughter of a Methodist minister.

He moved to America in the mid-1960s during the height of the civil rights movement and was in the USA when Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. His congregation in a mostly black Methodist church in Indianapolis insisted that he continue

THERE WAS DOUBLE CAUSE for celebration in the Good household this summer when both father and son received degrees from the University of Ulster.

Methodist Minister the Revd Harold Good was one of the two independent witnesses to the decommissioning of the IRA's arsenal in 2005.

He was awarded a Doctor of the University (DUniv) degree in recognition of his contribution to the peace process in Northern Ireland. His son Richard James Good also graduated at the same ceremony with a Masters of Science in Business Improvement.

A son of the Manse, the Revd Harold Good was born in 1937 in Co. Londonderry. His father, who was minister at the City Mission, was originally from Skibbereen in the Republic of Ireland. Revd Good began his ministry in the Methodist Church in Dublin in the late 1950s and was later transferred to Waterford,

his ministry to them in the aftermath of the killing.

Revd Good returned to Agnes Street in Belfast's Shankill area in 1968 and it became a place of sanctuary during serious rioting in the area, which saw the death of the first policeman killed during the Troubles, Constable Victor Arbuckle. In 1971 Revd Good was among rescuers who helped dig survivors out of the rubble of a furniture showroom in the area bombed by the IRA.

Over the succeeding decades he was heavily involved in the reconciliation work of the Corrymeela Community, serving as Centre Director, and he built up a reputation of trust among both loyalist and republican factions.

He is a former President of the Methodist Church in Ireland and last year he was awarded the World Methodist Peace Award. Previous winners include UN Secretary Kofi Annan, President Jimmy Carter and Nelson Mandela.



Break out the bubbly Former Corrymeela Leader becomes Bishop

CONGRATULATIONS to Trevor Williams who was recently elected as Bishop of Limerick, Killaloe & Ardfert. Trevor was born in Dublin in 1948. Ordained a deacon in 1974 and a priest the following year, he has since pursued a lifetime of ministry and service. Some of his accomplishments include curate in the Diocese of Oxford, Assistant Chaplain to Queen's University of Belfast, Religious Broadcasting Producer with the BBC, Rector of Newcastle Co. Down, and Canon of St Patrick's Cathedral. In 1993 he became leader of the Corrymeela Community, serving for 10 years. Under his dedicated leadership both the new Tara Unit and new House were opened, Corrymeela received the prestigious Niawano Peace Prize, and he took an active



role in organising the Dalai Lama's historic first visit to Belfast. To this day Trevor has retained a passionate and active interest in working for reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

We at Corrymeela celebrate with love and admiration, this significant moment in your life!

'Tree of Life' bears the fruits of peace – see it before it's too late



PEACE AND RECONCILIATION come in many shapes and forms, including art. Featured here is an award-winning half-tonne sculpture made out of chopped up guns and other decommissioned weapons titled Tree of Life. The sculpture from Mozambique was created as part of the Christian-Aid-supported Transforming Arms into Tools project (TAE – an abbreviation of the Portuguese title Transformacao de Armas em Enxadas).

Mozambican artists spent three months creating the three-metre-high sculpture, made entirely out of weapons such as AK47s, pistols and rocket-propelled grenade launchers. They see it as a way of using their art to promote peace.

There are still millions of arms hidden throughout

Mozambique – a legacy of the 16-year-long civil war that began on the eve of independence from Portugal in 1975. It ended in 1992 after an estimated one million people were killed, upwards of 1.7 million fled into neighbouring countries, and several million more were internally displaced. Bishop Dom Dinis Sengulane, who was involved in the peace negotiations between the Frelimo government and the Renamo rebels in 1992, came up with the idea for a weapons amnesty project that would help people give up their guns. Since 1995 the project, which employs some former child soldiers, has collected and dismantled more than 800,000 weapons.

In exchange for their guns, former combatants are offered building materials, tools and equipment such as sewing machines, bicycles, and

ploughs. One village received a tractor for handing in 500 weapons.

After being chopped up and dismantled by TAE staff, these tools of war begin their new life in the hands of Mozambican artists who create sculptures out of them. Their unique pieces of art are exhibited all over the world and include birds of peace, saxophones, chairs, monkeys and even jazz bands.

Hilario Nhatugueja, one of the four sculptors, says: 'We artists want to turn the situation around, change the story. Changing these instruments of death into hope, life and prosperity. This tree symbolises life, symbolises a future, symbolises hope.'

The massive three-metre-high sculpture, currently on display in the British Museum, was unveiled in February 2005 and will be in the

African galleries (room 25) until 2010. It is estimated that more than 25 million visitors to the museum from around the world will have the opportunity to see it. This means the time is nigh to join the lucky lot and witness this powerful symbol of peace work before it's too late.

Christian Aid is an international development organisation working with 650 partner organisations across 48 countries. It aims to expose the scandal of poverty, contribute to its eradication and challenge the systems, structures and processes that work against the interests of the poor and marginalised. Christian Aid has been supporting the Christian Council for Mozambique, who runs TAE, since 1984.

Applause for NI's Last Choir Standing



THE RECENT TV COMPETITION, BBC's Last Choir Standing, saw the talents of former Corrymeela member Maighread Kennedy singing in Northern Ireland's Open Arts Community Choir. The Open Arts Community Choir is an inclusive choir based in Belfast. Founded by Beverley Whyte in 2000, they are a choir of high standard who enjoy choral competitions but mainly love to sing. Admirably the choir wants people to focus on their abilities rather than their disabilities, evident in their prime-time performance. Congratulations to Maighread Kennedy and her fellow choir members for doing so well!

Corrymeela Millennium Volunteers make a difference



Millennium Volunteers



AFTER A HALF-YEAR of Corrymeela's involvement with the Millennium Volunteers scheme over 60 young people are actively participating. Corrymeela develops opportunities to meet each individual's needs, offering chances to volunteer in Belfast, Ballycastle, or in other placement organisations. Various areas are open to explore such as youth and group work, cooking and kitchen support, administration, housekeeping, gardening, IT support and reception. It just depends what you have to offer. Most participants are well on their way or have completed 200 hours of service by which they will receive the Award of Excellence from the

Minister of Education. The ceremony for all Millennium Volunteers is due to take place in early 2009.

If you are interested in taking on new challenges and learning new skills, meeting new people and having a laugh, ensuring kudos from future employers, and just plain making a difference, contact Sonja Tammen on 028 2076 2626 or sonjatammen@corrymeela.org

New Schools staff

WE ARE PLEASED to introduce our new Primary Schools Worker, Nicola McKeown, to the Corrymeela Community. Nicola lives in Ballymena with her husband, Ian. She has been teaching in primary schools for over 10 years and has taught both in Northern Ireland and in London. Nicola is a member of Hillside Community Church in Ballymena, where she is involved in running a youth group and singing in the worship band. She loves travelling, reading and eating good dessert! Nicola states



about her post, 'I am looking forward this year to designing programmes and working with a variety of primary schools. I am excited about the challenges that working here at Corrymeela will give me.' Welcome Nicola!



Coventry build coming along

WITH A COMPLETION projected for the end of November, volunteers and visitors alike are watching the brand new accommodation transform before their eyes. Watch for full coverage of the Coventry grand opening in our next magazine.

Ulster Bank



Ulster Bank donates dishwasher

THANKS VERY MUCH to the Ulster Bank Staff Charity Fund for our new dishwasher. Clean teacups and plates are an invaluable gift for the ever busy staff and groups who use Corrymeela House.

Ballynafeigh conference to promote shared neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland



MINISTER MARGARET RITCHIE reinforced her commitment to a Shared Future when she opened Ballynafeigh's 4 September conference, Cohesion, Sharing and Inclusion – sharing the learning from Ballynafeigh.

The conference brought together community practitioners, politicians and policy makers to participate in a number of discussions and workshops.

Minister Ritchie said, 'I want to be very clear that a Shared Future is at the heart of all my work, supporting good relations between people of different religious beliefs and political opinions.' She continued, 'This shared future will not evolve on its own; it must be built, and built

for our changing communities.'

The workshops showcased Ballynafeigh as an example of a shared neighbourhood in practice and explored the lessons to be learned from shared neighbourhood practice as we all move towards a more pluralist Northern Ireland.

Event organiser Anne McKay said, 'The conference marked the end of a Peace 2 Extension funded Project. It proved to be a very interesting day, especially the effect of using theatre as a tool in the legislative process and wider shared debate.'

Finton Brady from Theatre Lab delivered the powerful piece of socio-drama that examined the challenges of shared neighbourhood

practice. He said, 'The interactive drama has two main benefits: it makes visible what we are already aware of but take for granted and also it creates a public platform for conversations that would not otherwise be heard or even happen in the first place.'

Corrymeela Interface Community Worker Susan McEwen facilitated one of four workshops given, called 'A Shared What? Interactive look at the obstacles to, and benefits of sharing.' Thought-provoking questions such as 'Does sharing mean giving up or losing something?' and 'What would tip the scales in the favour of sharing?' were discussed and solutions were offered by participants to members of parliament.

Annual Report 2007/08

LOOK OUT for your copy of our Annual Report. With a message from our Chairperson, Kate Pettis, it outlines our achievements throughout the year thanks to your support!

We remember

A. G. Garrett
from Enfield

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from Illkley

William H. Rutherford
from Belfast

E. G. Moore
from Tunbridge Wells

Vera Jane Annett
from Annalong

Roland J. Magill
from Downpatrick

William Glass
from Ballycastle

We sincerely hope that it brings a little comfort to know that their legacy gifts will be put to very good use building our next generation of accommodation at the Ballycastle Centre.



Tony Blair launches Faiths Act Fellowship

TONY BLAIR recently announced the launch of the Faiths Act Fellowship to engage young people who will lead the way in uniting religious communities in the fight against deaths due to malaria. In Spring 2009, thirty outstanding young people will be chosen from the US, UK, and Canada to serve as inter-religious ambassadors for the Millennium Development Goals in their countries. The Fellowship, launched by the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, will be coordinated by the Chicago-based Interfaith Youth Core. Application deadline is 15 January 2009. For more information, or to apply, visit www.faithsactfellows.org or www.ifyc.org

Thank you Pam

FOR OVER 10 years Corrymeela member Pam Compton has volunteered tirelessly in the shop at the Centre. She has successfully raised funds every year through the sale of Corrymeela merchandise, ethical products and not to forget the wonderful array of T-shirts and sweatshirts that have marked every summer. Thank you, Pam, for all your hard work – it is very much appreciated by us all.

THE CROÍ

REFURBISHMENT APPEAL 2008 – THIRTY YEARS ON



HOPEFULLY BY NOW you will have received a letter about our exciting and very necessary refurbishment of the Croí at our Centre in Ballycastle.

'This place is rightly called An Croí – the heart. Indeed it is heart-shaped. Here we can take time to listen to the great heartbeat – in a society where there are so many

violent and destructive beats, here we can take time to listen to the heartbeat that guides, inspires and unites us together.' From the words of Ray Davey at the opening of the Croí on 12 June 1979.

True to Ray's predictions at the official opening, the Croí has been a place of celebration and hope. All sorts of events have taken

place where people have celebrated their togetherness – meeting with each other and getting to know each other, rejoicing in being accepted and feeling that they belong. The Croí is a place of joy and laughter, of song and dance, of music and drama – proclaiming the unity of God's creation and totality of life together. It is a place where the bereaved and hurt find comfort, where the lonely find friends, where the threatened and insecure find support, and where young people find meaning and purpose. For many who visit Corrymeela this is the special place where they find hope.

£160,000 has been raised to date to fund the refurbishment of the Croí but we still need to raise the balance of £40,000. Everyone

at Corrymeela would be very grateful for any donations received to help us look after this very special building which is at the heart of everything we do.



To make a donation please call Bernie Magill on 028 9050 8080, or post your donation marked 'Croí Appeal' to Corrymeela House, 8 Upper Crescent, Belfast, BT7 1NT.



Summer fun the Corrymeela way...

THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS officially started in Ballycastle with a day packed full of celebration, fun and learning for all ages. Corrymeela welcomed over five hundred people to share in the summer festival day; people came from all over Northern Ireland to enjoy the hospitality. The children enjoyed the packed programme of free ice cream, puppet shows, face painting and who could forget the stilt walkers from Ballycastle.

Teenagers worked up a storm in their music and drum workshop, while in the marquee adults took part listening to the keynote speaker, Donald Shriver, who travelled from the USA to take part. Donald was joined during the day by panel members Nuala O'Loan, Harold Good, Duncan Morrow, William



Crawley, Inderjit Boghal, and Assistant Chief Constable Alistair Finlay. Others led informative discussions on politics, environmental and global issues, drama and film and much more. One young participant of the drumming group said 'I think what our performance was all about was showing how everyone had fun together, sharing good craic, making good music and new friends.'

The day finished with a



delicious BBQ and concert featuring Corrymeela's local singer-songwriter Shane O'Neill, 'A clatter of folk' from the Ulster Scots Folk Orchestra, then local band Plan Z, followed by the acclaimed Lowly Knights and finished off by the headline Belfast band The Delawares.

Ronnie Millar, Centre Director, said 'The day was a tremendous success and it was wonderful to see so

many people engaged in dialogue and also enjoying meeting old and new friends. Moyle Music Collective did a brilliant job with our sound and light and we are grateful for the support of Rays Coaches from Armoyle.'

We do hope to see you again next year for another fun-filled, informative Corrymeela Summer Festival!

In case you missed the festivities, read an excerpt from Donald Shriver's moving keynote speech on the next page.



Memory, long road into the future

Donald W. Shriver, Jr.

Keynote speaker at Corrymeela Summer Festival 2008



NOW I AM NOT SURE just what the new government of Northern Ireland ought to do about addressing the pains of the past, but I am very sure that it is building up citizen wrath to come if it decides merely to ignore those pains, to invent no public memorial to them, and to offer no symbolic or material compensation to the wounds which survive in this society, similar to wounds that some members of every society carry in their bodies or their spirits from the past. When, in 1999, the Oregon legislature officially repealed an 1849 law forbidding black people from crossing the territorial border; one black citizen exclaimed, 'At last they have told our story!' Not to permit

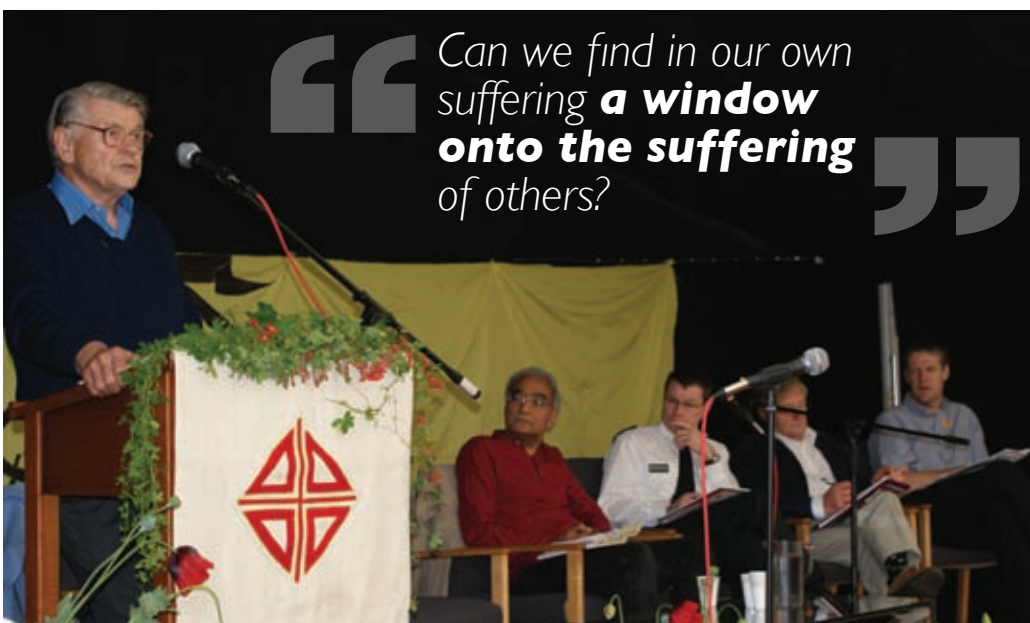
government to get away with public amnesia – that is one continuing reason for the pressures of citizens upon government from all sides of every country's 'troubles'. It's a hard case, I grant: Are the losses on all sides susceptible to joint public mourning? A lot of citizen conversation will have to decide. Right now in New York City, we are building memorials to 9/11; and one of my regrets is that so far the suffering families have refused to incorporate some gesture of mourning for the terrorist-suffering of other peoples around the world. Personally, I have to respect the New York Mayor who, soon after 9/11, called attention to the 40,000 Londoners who perished



in the Blitz of 1940. Can we find in our own suffering a window onto the suffering of others? I hope we can, but at least in 2008 in Northern Ireland, it will be a test of your entry into a real democratic order if you can find room in the public mind and public symbols to take account of the costs, justified or not, which many people paid to bring a new measure of peace and justice to this society.

It's a question for much citizen debate: can we design public memorials to the injustices of the past which do some justice to all sides of the conflict? Can we, in the very decisions of the design of memorials, expand public empathy for the 'other' side? Clegg and Liechty, authors of *Moving Beyond Sectarianism*, ask: 'What kind of structures and processes might we put in place, within our traditions and across traditions, to help one another let out our hurts and to ritualize remembering, repentance, forbearance, and forgiveness?' I recommend seeking some help in these matters from contemporary Germany, which has astonished the world by its ability to deal in public ways with its own negative history of 1933–45.

Donald W. Shriver Jr., Union Theological Seminary, New York, is one of the world's leading experts on citizenship. He has written on the Holocaust, Apartheid, the Civil Rights Movement in America and is the author of *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics and Honest Patriots: Loving a Country Enough to Remember its Misdeeds*.



Speaker Donald W. Shriver Jr. with panel members Inderjit, Alistair, Harold, and Duncan

“ Can we find in our own suffering **a window onto the suffering** of others? ”

Aberdeen Corrymeela support group

THE LOWDOWN

GREETINGS FROM ABERDEEN, or as they say here 'Fit like!'

The Aberdeen Corrymeela support group, set up over 25 years ago when the Troubles were at their height, seeks to support the Corrymeela Community's crucial work and to enable us to keep up to date with events across the water.

Today the group has 20 regular members of all ages and backgrounds, some originally from Northern Ireland but mostly Scots and both Protestant and Catholic. We meet four times a year for discussions and worship and our gatherings vary in nature; most recently a retired army officer, who served in Northern Ireland during the 1970s and 1980s, offered fascinating insight into life in post-Troubles Northern Ireland, as reflected in a selection of Belfast newspapers.

To most people Aberdeen, in north-east Scotland, is probably best known as the oil capital of Europe, one of the more prosperous parts of the United Kingdom.

However the social and economic landscape is in a state of great flux, the city is reeling from swingeing cuts to our authority services while the local demographic is undergoing significant changes with increasing numbers of Eastern Europeans settling in the community.

Indeed one of the most refreshing aspects of life here in the north-east is the lack of sectarianism and religious bigotry to be found in other parts of Scotland.

The Corrymeela support group has long felt it is equally important to find out about other faiths as to develop Protestant/Catholic relationships. So as a result, we have had two really interesting discussions with members of the Muslim and Baha'i communities.

The high point of our year is our annual coffee morning held around St Patrick's Day. Over the years, we have raised over £30,000 purely from this event which is always a well-supported, friendly and happy morning. All the proceeds go directly to Corrymeela to be spent on whatever is the current area of work most in need of funding.

We have maintained strong links with the Corrymeela group based in Coleraine and have met with them in beautiful and memorable locations including Pluscarden Abbey, near Elgin, Iona, and of course Corrymeela's Ballycastle Centre itself.

This last visit was, for some of us, our first trip to Northern Ireland as well as Corrymeela and it was a weekend to be treasured. One of the highlights for many of us was Anne Jack's whistle-stop tour of the North Antrim coast, a whirlwind in an afternoon!

We are always delighted to welcome new members so if you find yourself in Aberdeen please get in touch!

Heartfelt thanks to Aberdeen founding member Bob Brown who recently stepped down as Chairperson. Sister Moira Donnelly has agreed to succeed his position. Also, David Stevens, Leader of the Corrymeela Community, will visit Aberdeen to attend the 12 November meeting.



Summer School 2009

I RECENTLY HAD AN ENJOYABLE EVENING with a Community Cell Group at the Centre as they had been evicted from their usual meeting place by the demands of offering hospitality to a group. We discussed a number of issues, one of which was the way in which Community members' commitment to peace and reconciliation was outworked, hands on, at the Centre.

We discussed how can we use and involve the passion of more of our members and volunteers to carry out more in-depth reconciliation work at the Centre. This has led me to asking whether anyone would have an interest in re-designing a Summer-School-type programme that we could incorporate into the Summer Programme 2009?

I would be interested over the coming months to hear from you, to share stories and to dream of what might be integrated into my day-to-day work to create more shared experiences between Community members and Corrymeela, Ballycastle. You can contact me via the Centre or directly by email or phone. I look forward to future conversations and hopefully meeting face-to-face.

Matt Scrimgeour, Programme Co-ordinator
mattscrimgeour@corrymeela.org
 Tel. 028 2076 1726 / 07968 362152

For further information, or to join Aberdeen Corrymeela support group, contact Rosie Leavett on rjleavett3@btinternet.com



Community building at the beach

WORLD BEACH PROJECT, a global art project open to anybody of any age, saw contributions from Ballycastle beach this summer. Set up by Sue Lawty in association with the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, this project combines the simplicity of making patterns with stones with the complexities of shape, size, colour, tone, composition, similarity and difference. Art work from beaches all around the world has been photographed and displayed on the museum's website.

The Spreading Wings group in Ballycastle (led by David Quinney Mee) heard of the World Beach Project and developed the idea in the local community with families and young people. I became part of that larger project by incorporating it into my family and community work with Corrymeela. For example, families from Ballycastle Sure Start, and many other interested children passing by, gathered on World Ocean day, 8 June 2008, at Ballycastle beach to create all kinds of 'Beach Pictures'. Also Foster Families came to the Centre and together made a beautiful tree to celebrate the nurture of their new 'family'. The range of expressions was a treat for the average



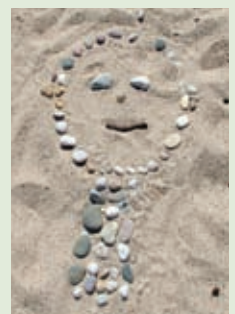
beachcomber, finding birds, stars and faces lying across the sand.

Summer culminated with a week-long festival of events in Ballycastle called the Four Swans Festival, which focused on environmental issues and climate change. There were story telling and sea shanties, epic sponsored swims from Rathlin Island to Ballycastle and a 'light-bulb amnesty' to collect the old and give out new energy-saving



bulbs. During the festival I helped implement the type of creative learning I use at Corrymeela. A sculpture out of bulbs was put atop a Willow spiral sculpture made round the monument in the middle of the Diamond in Ballycastle. The bulbs were lit by solar panel and shone out at night to illuminate the Willow sculpture adorned with silver jumping fish. Thus families from the town and other local helpers were able to explore and express an important topic through art. Town folk made a float for the final parade, children in Puffin costumes and local skilled young people stilt-walked, drummers drummed and mermaids were all part of this celebration of diversity and fun that came from the very top of the town and all the way to the sea front. A fitting place to end; throughout the season the beach proved a powerful space for community building.

Rachel Craig

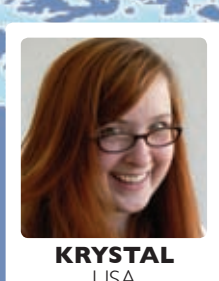


Rachel Craig is the Corrymeela Family and Community Worker

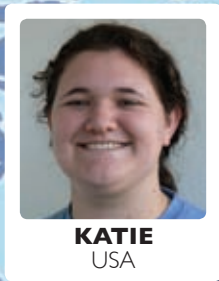
THE WORLD OF VOLUNTEERS



MARK
USA



KRYSTAL
USA



KATIE
USA



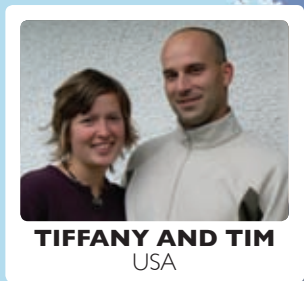
ANDREW
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ALICE
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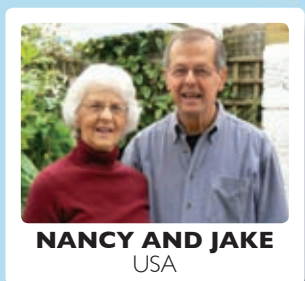
CONOR
N. IRELAND



TIFFANY AND TIM
USA



CHRIS
ENGLAND



NANCY AND JAKE
USA



ELSA
EL SALVADOR

"I see the ethos of compassion, support, inclusion"

WORLD OF TEERING



MYE
SWEDEN



ARZU
TURKEY



LISA
GERMANY



VISHWAS
INDIA



JACOB
SRI LANKA



VOLUNTEERS
2008-2009

... of Corrymeela to be one
... n, respect, understanding,
... ussivity and spirituality.

WHO'S LONG-TERM VOLU

Volunteers are the gas in the engine, the charm of the spell, the valves in the heart. They have been utterly essential and fundamental to the realisation of Corrymeela's mission, giving their time, indeed a year of their life or longer, to serve. With eager welcome we introduce the new 2008–09 long-term volunteers, Programme Development Assistant, Resource couple, and Knocklayd host couple.

Andrew Magennis

I'm Andrew Magennis, 24, from Co. Armagh, N. Ireland. For the past two years I have been working for Youth Action as a full-time Youth Worker.

'Corrymeela made such a huge impact on me that I wanted to return in a volunteer capacity.'

Chris Foxall

Hi everyone, my name is Chris Foxall. I'm 19, from Redditch in England. I've just finished college where I studied Art and Design. I would class myself as an 'up for anything' kind of guy; my interests are sports, cars and being creative.

'I hope to learn more about myself and experience living with people from all around the world.'

Mye Kallander

My name is Mye, 19, and I am from Sweden. I am newly graduated from high school, constantly chasing my dreams and trying to fill my life with laughs and new experiences.

'If I can make a difference for just one person I will be more than satisfied.'

Conor McGrath

Hiya, I'm Conor McGrath, from right here in Northern Ireland: Newry, Co. Armagh. I have just received my Diploma in Business Studies, I'm 18 and would like a career in Social Work, Youth Work or Psychology.

'I want to discover what it is that makes Corrymeela so open and welcoming to all.'

Arzu Mizrak

I'm Arzu Mizrak from Turkey and I'm 21. I have spent three years in Pakistan where I studied English Language and Literature, then two years studying at university in England.

'I love to help people, learn about different cultures and share something about myself.'

Elsa Trejo Mena

My name is Elsa Guadalupe Trejo Mena and I like people to call me Elsa or Lupita. I am 22, from El Salvador, Central America. I graduated from university two months ago as an English teacher. I like to learn about everything and everyone; each of us has something special to show others.

'Being a volunteer to me means to work with your heart for others without expecting anything back.'

Katie Dalton

I'm Katie Dalton, 21, from the United States. I recently finished a Bachelor of Science in Sociology and a minor in Faith-Justice studies at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

'I developed a passion for social justice and I think the best way to achieve justice is the type of peace that Corrymeela works hard to create.'

Lisa Scharbach

My name is Lisa Scharbach and I am 20, from a little village called Glottertal in the south of Germany near Freiburg.

'I want to have a new experience and meet a lot of new interesting people.'

WHO? VOLUNTEERS 2008-09

Krystal Cooper

My name is Krystal, I come from Minnesota, USA, and I am 24. I focused on International and Religious Studies at university and I interned with the Glenree Peace Centre last year.

'After being a short-term volunteer at Corrymeela in 2005 I had a meaningful experience that left me wanting to help more.'

Jacob Jeshanth

Greetings – I'm J. J. Jacob from the Eastern province of Sri Lanka. I'm 23 and I like to help others. Since leaving school I have worked with Youth for Christ and the Children's Emergency Relief International organisation.

'I hope to do great things for God.'

Mark Boylan

My name is Mark Boylan, I am 22, from Massachusetts, USA. I have just graduated from a Quaker university with a degree in Politics. This summer I taught woodworking to children (an amazing break from politics).

'I hope to educate and be educated.'

Vishwas Udgirkar

I am Vishwas, 25, from India. I have studied a Bachelors in English Literature. I hope to work with diverse groups of people from all over the world.

'I hope my stay will encourage and strengthen me to bring peace and reconciliation, through the love and care of Jesus Christ, on my return to my country next year.'

Alice McCullough

My name is Alice McCullough and I'm the brand new Programme Development Assistant at Corrymeela. I'm 25 and I grew up in East Belfast. I am a community artist and illustrator and share a studio in Belfast's Cathedral Quarter. My illustration work has included the poetry book

Available Light, the children's story book The Little Girl With Brown Hair and the artwork for the musical Hippos In The Shower. I founded the Art Group, an open space in Belfast for people to come together and express their creativity, and I have a keen interest in the use of art as therapy.

'I see the ethos of Corrymeela to be one of compassion, respect, understanding, support, inclusivity and spirituality.'

Tim and Tiffany Rendell

Hello from Tim and Tiffany. Tim grew up in New Jersey just outside of New York City, and Tiffany is a Texan from Arlington, but we met in the Boston area which is where we lived after being married on St Patrick's Day, 2006.

Tim has worked with children's ministry organisations and was involved in a small Congregational church in Beverly, MA. Tiffany has worked with some great experiential learning/ outdoor adventure organisations, such as Project Adventure as well as Gordon College's LaVida programme.

'We both love the outdoors, sports, the arts, philosophy/theology, great food, good books, and getting to know people – we are excited to be here at Corrymeela as the Resource Couple.'

Nancy and Jake Rittenhouse

We have recently arrived in Northern Ireland to serve as Corrymeela Knocklayd hosts for the next year. We hail from Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA, and this is our first time in Northern Ireland. We have both recently retired. Jake taught music and conducted choirs during his professional career in Arizona and Kansas. The majority of Nancy's career was serving as an administrative assistant in public education.

'We are looking forward to the many experiences which will be afforded us as hosts of Knocklayd as well as learning much about the Irish culture.'

Loyalist communities are contributing to positive environment

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A shared society doesn't mean however that we create a neutral society

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THERE HAS BEEN MUCH COMMENTARY over the past number of months to mark the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. This commentary acknowledged very strongly the historic compromise and accommodation made at the political level.

But what about the people – what about the communities?

The ceasefires of the mid-nineties provided the political leadership with the space to foster political agreement and the on-going peace has enabled these agreements to be implemented. Within republican and loyalist communities numerous people have been working morning, noon and night over the past decade to ensure that peace has prevailed and that there is a positive environment in which politics can continue to move forward.

Within the loyalist community, a significant number of positive leaders have been willing to put their heads above the parapet to make life better for their community and to help foster the positive environment which makes wider community life more peaceful.

Some of the initiatives that have emerged in recent times include:

- **Better management around 11 July bonfires, resulting in safer bonfires, fewer incidents of anti-social behaviour and less of a burden on the emergency and public services**
- **The removal of militaristic murals from within communities through engagement with the Re-Imaging Communities programme**
- **Interface networks – working across peace lines to transform inter-community violence**
- **Greater engagement on the parading issue at a local level**
- **The moves towards making 12 July more of a family-focused festival**
- **The eradication of sectarianism from IFA internationals**
- **The community engagement work of the Orange Order and their recent engagement with the Catholic Church**
- **Groups from loyalist areas who have participated in events to celebrate St Patrick's Day**

And the list could go on! However, all of us



Anti-drugs mural in Knocknagoney put up to replace a UDA mural

who have an interest in creating a diverse society must become active supporters of those seeking to take a risk to do things differently. Creating positive change isn't easy and is challenging for many. A shared society doesn't mean however that we create a neutral society in which everyone has to water down their identity to fit in. A shared society contains a variety of differing cultures living out and sharing their heritage and identity in a confident and positive way. In Northern Ireland, loyalism is rising to this challenge.

Politics and communities are becoming more and more interdependent of each other. When politics is stable, communities can have the confidence to make positive change. These positive changes in turn help create an environment for politics to succeed. Credit must go to communities and community leaders for the continued success of the peace process, as well as to the politicians.

It also means that community-based initiatives need as much focus, support, encouragement and resources as is invested in political structures.

David Robinson

David Robinson, from Bray in Co. Wicklow, is a Good Relations Officer with Belfast City Council. He is responsible for the Council's Bonfire Management Programme. He was a full-time volunteer at Corrymeela from 1996–97 and worked at the Ballycastle Centre as a youth development worker from 1997–99. (robinsond3@belfastcity.gov.uk)



David Robinson

In May a group of students from Arlington High School in Boston came to Northern Ireland to link with pupils from Hazelwood Integrated College and learn about peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. As part of their study trip the students spent some time at Corrymeela, where they learned about its history and ethos and in particular learned about the work of the Corrymeela Schools programme and its efforts to help pupils in our segregated school system to meet and build friendships with pupils from other backgrounds.

An exercise in trust: one student's reflection on reconciliation

FROM THE MOMENT WE ARRIVED at the Centre in Ballycastle and were warmly greeted by a team of enthusiastic volunteers, we realised that this experience was to be like no other. Our group of thirty American high school students from suburban Boston travelled to Ireland in search of cultural enrichment; in the end, we learned not only about peace and reconciliation, but also about ourselves.

When it came time for the inevitable 'getting to know you' activities, I eagerly volunteered to put on a blindfold and hop between tree stumps. This exercise felt different and somehow more important than others I had experienced; everything took on new meaning for me, a sixteen-year-old student, at Corrymeela. Although I was nervous surrounded by other students I did not know very well, I started across the unknown terrain. I felt my way through, listening to the instructions of my fellow students. They offered me their hands, and I accepted, determined to make it across. And I did, with the support of classmates and teachers, one step at a time.

These familiar team-building exercises take on new meaning when placed in the context of reconciliation. I am constantly reminded of this at home by a poster that I carried home from Ballycastle; it reads, 'For a secure future, we need to build trust, so that our differences will no longer be a threat to stability, but a cause for celebration.' As I made my way, blindfolded, through that cluster of trees, I did



not feel vulnerable; instead, I felt a deep sense of community surrounding and protecting me.

Corrymeela is the most open community that I have ever encountered; there are no shallow attempts to prove the existence of diversity, but rather a genuine sense of belonging and acceptance. We saw firsthand how Corrymeela has been so successful in building connections between groups of different backgrounds, and we were reminded of the need to embrace differences in our own community. Our group came to a deeper understanding of this need after hearing stories of the Troubles.

Both the Troubles and even Northern Ireland seem to have been forgotten in the United States, but worldwide sectarianism is real. Ignoring this fact is a grave disservice to the people who are relentlessly working to change the world for the better in places such as Northern Ireland; ordinary citizens of all creeds labouring to break the cycle of ignorance and prejudice in an area recovering from a devastating period of conflict. Corrymeela is a true community of diversity and hope, and there is a genuine sincerity in the work that is done there, and it should serve as an example for others who wish to change the world, one step at a time.

Alessandra Bautze

“
They offered me their hands, and I accepted
”



Alessandra Bautze

The leaves of the tree

Asylum seekers and the healing of the nations



IN 1978 I MANAGED TO SEW half a leaf for the Tree of Life that was to adorn the new Croí. I pricked myself three times before Julie Millichamp finished it off. I have never sewn since, an unnecessary

task for a left-handed married man. But I have always believed in the Tree of Life and have never forgotten that its leaves were for the healing of the nations. It has ever been a source of wonder to me that I learned so much about 'the nations' in this small province where, in 1978, apart from Chinese restaurants, black British soldiers and Corrymeela volunteers, there really were only two tribes.

A few years later, I became a parish priest in a dismal church in the East End of London; dismal that was, until the asylum seekers moved in. They began to appear one Sunday at the back, quiet and shivering Africans. And our churches were no longer dull. We visited their lodgings and heard



their stories; we found them clothes; we went to court with them; we offered one woman, who was awaiting deportation and danger, sanctuary. I was called a 'communist' on the News by a Tory MP (this was the 1980s). The sanctuary wasn't necessary because she won in the High Court. Church had started to be fun. The Bible drew closer to us; the preaching got better; we sang some new hymns; the same people who found clothes joined the study groups. The asylum seekers were evangelising us. Only this year I came across a quotation that interpreted what was going on:

'The evangelisation of the poor came first, so that with them and from their point of view, we can carry out the evangelisation of the whole community.' (Archbishop Marcos McGrath of Panama)

The same thing happened to us in an even more difficult church in the 1990s, but this time it was Kosovan Muslims. They didn't worship with us, but they called us to become what we were, as we started clothing stores, English classes, and went and argued with the supermarkets to accept their food vouchers. Once again, the Bible developed a plainer meaning, the Eucharist became a love feast.

Now I am a priest without a parish. Like so many Corrymeela members, I find church hard and am relieved to live on its margins. But I have seen enough to stick in there. No other organisation has a story to tell which finds abundance because it interprets life from the bottom. And if we tried

to invent a new story, our unconscious arrogance would thwart us. So for me, the Church has to stay. There is no other bearer of meaning that leads back to Jesus.

I am now our Bishop's Adviser for Asylum and Refugees. I look back to the 1980s with nostalgia. Asylum seekers are as likely now to be in detention as in church. Over 2000 of them are detained without trial. Stop me if you have heard this one before . . . But they are still the source of hope for our whole nation, for the nations . . . one of the groups of people through whom the Spirit pleads with us to discover our own well being. Just as our whole nation has been dignified by the Hospice Movement and by groups like L'Arche, so do these people have clues to the flourishing of all.

For example, in 1985, there were 35,000 people in prison in the UK. Now there are 87,000. Why are there so many? A lot of people are not quite sure. It's just what we seem to do nowadays. A changing approach to the asylum seekers in detention might be a changing approach to prison in general. Asylum seekers frighten us, and when we are frightened, our imagination freezes. These people do not need to be in prison, and their presence there is a source of shame. I spend quite a lot of time prison-visiting. I have supported one young man through a twenty-eight month tour of Chelmsford, Colnbrook, Belmarsh and Wormwood Scrubs prisons, where he has been staying without charge or explanation. After a dirty protest he was finally let out. Of course, we don't know that it was the stink that got him out, but we don't know why he was there anyway! Kafka was writing fiction about this type of thing nearly a hundred years ago.

I also go once a week to lead a Bible study in a prison for foreign nationals. These ones have all been charged, occasionally for theft or drugs offences, but most of them for forging passports to escape from nasty regimes. Many are excellent theologians. They know their Bibles



well. They know that the victim has a privileged understanding of how society works. They also know that they are sinners, and are using prison for the reformation of their own lives. I baptised one of them on Easter Sunday, the most joyful baptism I have ever conducted.

There is a wide network of people who stand with asylum seekers. Sometimes it seems that the whole nation is against us. But did not God tell Elijah that 'those who are with you are more than those who are against you'? Or perhaps it was Elisha. My prisoners would know. One of the things that prevents us becoming a single issue group, 'the usual suspects', is that there are so many Christians among us. That is, I believe, people whose interest is not narrow, but who recognise, with William Blake, that 'a dog starved at his master's gate/predicts the ruin of the state', and who, also with Blake, still long for the building of Jerusalem in our own lands.

Where we find joy among people whose lives are so bleak is where we also find the religious imagination: the same imagination that has always fired Corrymeela and was able to believe that :

'The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.'

Rob Wiggs

Rob was a volunteer at Corrymeela from 1977 to 1978 with his wife, Lib. He is an Anglican priest who teaches theology to people training for ministry in Chelmsford and London. He has been a Community member for the last four years and visits Northern Ireland four or five times a year.



“
Asylum seekers are as likely now to be in detention as in church
”

Bridging the gap

GLASGOW AND BELFAST may be two entirely different places, but for one weekend at Corrymeela youth from each city came together to discover their similarities.

In mid-2008, students from the East Belfast Area Youth Project and Glasgow's Bridging the Gap organisation got to know each other through a series of activities, discussions and informal chats. They met at Corrymeela's Ballycastle Centre as part of Bridging the Gap – a cross-community project now in its tenth year. The weekend created a space in which they could learn from one another what the issues facing their communities are.

Youth from both areas said sectarianism was present in their cities. Students reported sectarian acts of discrimination and violence being carried out because of the clothes someone wore, the colour of their skin, the area they lived or the haircut they had. Whether someone supported Rangers or Celtic was also a source of contention in both communities. After participants explained how people are identified as belonging to a group, Corrymeela Youth Work Co-ordinator Ivan Cross, who headed the weekend, asked whether what the two groups were saying sounded the same. Several participants could be heard replying, 'Yes.'

Terry Strain, a Project Worker from Bridging

the Gap, said it is the realisation of how similar life can be for youth from two different places that is 'intrinsic to Bridging the Gap's values of finding common ground'.

More connections were made as they engaged in a debate where the goal was to try to explain your views well enough to convince others to change their opinion. Heated discussions were had around statements such as, 'girls should look their best at all times', and 'cultural symbols should be banned from schools'.

Despite differing opinions, immediately following the debate participants worked together to create costumes for a combination fashion show and disco taking place that evening.

'It was good to see the young people building relationships,' Terry said. 'At the start of the weekend, they're physically separated in the room – on one end it's East Belfast and the other it's Glasgow – but by the end you have people mixing, and keeping in touch through Bebo . . .'

The initial split between students is hardly surprising – although physical violence due to sectarianism may no longer exist here to the intensity it once did, caution of the 'other' is still very present in Northern Ireland and in Glasgow. One of the aims that Corrymeela's youth programme





focuses on is creating a safe space for participants where they no longer have to worry about stating where they're from and what they believe. That safe space also serves to give participants chances to challenge their views and form bonds with people they wouldn't normally meet due to existing stereotypes and segregations.

At the end of the weekend, the East Belfast group presented the Glasgow group with a thank you card and everyone shared with one another what they liked about the weekend. Meeting new people, having discussions, playing games and dancing together were among the most popular answers.

After leaving the Centre, the group participated in one last activity – a tour of Belfast with its many murals, peace walls and historical sites.

Those from Glasgow got an up-close look at what sectarian attitudes can lead to.

'They were surprised by the murals in particular – they were asking questions about what would happen if you didn't want a mural on the side of your house, and we were told "you don't have a choice",' Terry said.

The trip was a reminder for all that sectarianism has many forms and the hardest task to combat it is still ahead. Namely, it is the task of fostering trust in places where the tradition has been one of fear.

This task can only be accomplished by continuing to build relationships between communities. Only unlike for these students, the process of creating more widespread peace will take longer than a weekend and will be more painful. It will also take just as much courage from all involved.

The Bridging the Gap organisation seems up for the challenge.

'I'd really like to see Bridging the Gap and the East Belfast Project forming a relationship and doing some projects together,' Terry said. 'I think that it's important for the young people to see that we as leaders are also committed to cross-community work by bringing people to Corrymeela.'

Linda Sjostrom

Linda is a university student from the United States. She spent one semester living in Northern Ireland to study the history of the Troubles and current peace and reconciliation efforts, as well as do a work placement with Corrymeela's Belfast office.



SHINGO SPENT SIX WEEKS working alongside the team in Corrymeela House as part of his university exchange programme. He took time out to share his lasting impressions of Northern Ireland.

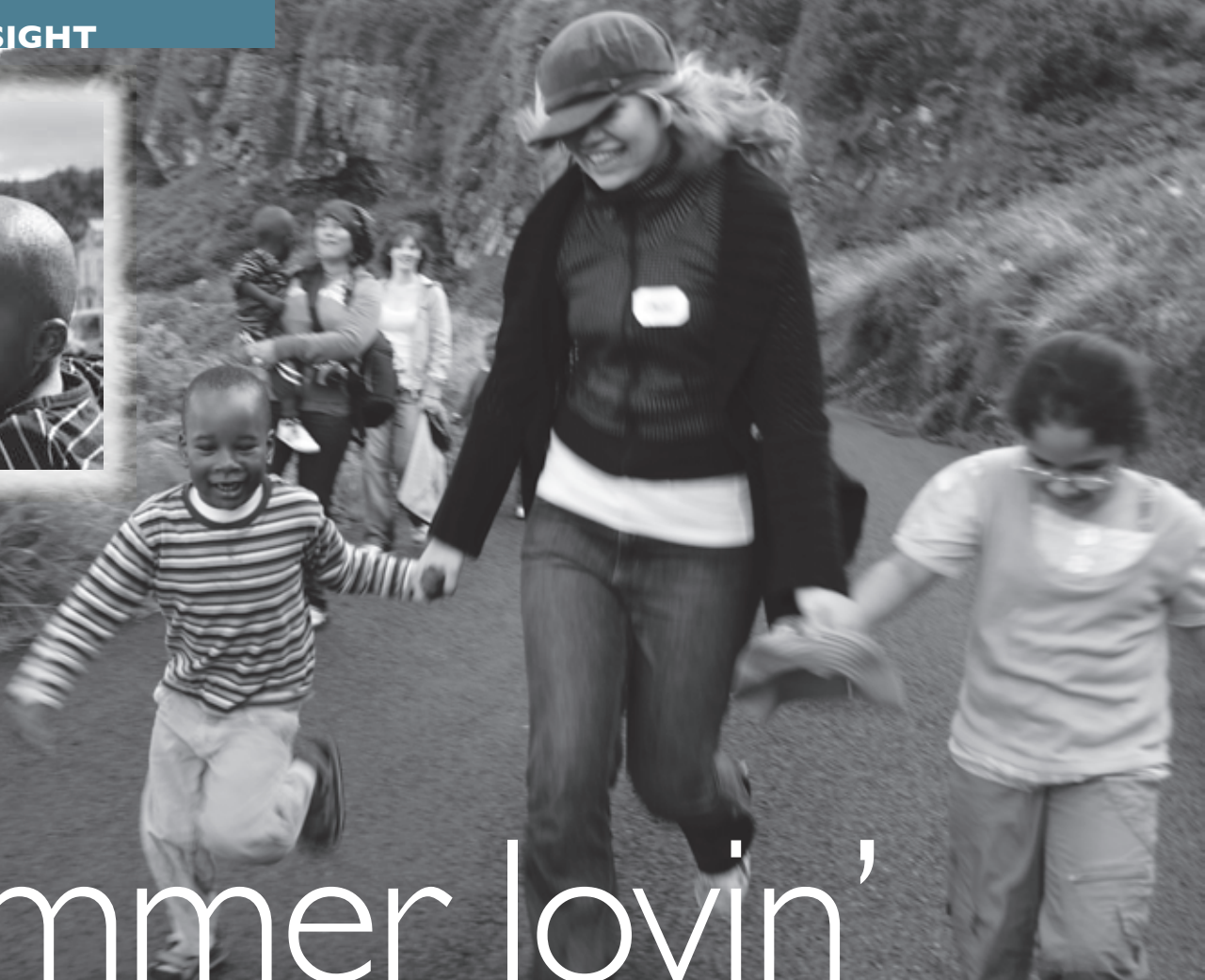
Experience of positive peace

I WOULD DEFINITELY SAY that more people in Northern Ireland are involved in community development than people in Japan. It is clear communities here are trying to work through their problems.

What has astonished me most is how citizens are thinking critically, imaginatively and harmoniously on what peace is and how it can be best achieved. People here can describe their history in detail and are interested in other communities in similar situations, for example the Palestine/Israel conflict.

There is a saying in Japan that people become complacent after a long period of peace. Comparing Northern Ireland with Japan, I am convinced people here are not complacent and have a better understanding of what they have to do to improve their society and bring about 'positive peace'. I am eager to take the lessons I've learned surrounding community development and conflict back to my country.

Shingo Katoh, 22 years old, studies politics and international relations at Earlham College, USA, after transferring from Waseda University, Japan, in 2006. Shingo was a volunteer at Corrymeela House for eight weeks, April-May 2008.



Summer lovin' — had me a blast

CORRYMEELA'S EVER-BUSY SUMMER PROGRAMME once again proved a fantastic fun-filled eight weeks. Volunteers of every age turned up from all around the world to support the full schedule and the various family, youth and community groups as always brought bountiful energy and creativity to the experience. With trips to the beach, water games, arts and crafts, BBQs, countless activities and those famous summer concerts there was always something for everyone. To hear a personal take on a summer visit to Corrymeela, we hear from Deacon Sue Culver, who fulfilled the often unsung role of 'person on cover'.

'BACK AGAIN having just returned from a week's volunteering with the Corrymeela Community in Ballycastle being what is called the "Cover" person. What this involves is basically being responsible for health and safety and hospitality in the Centre. If there's a fire, the Cover sorts it. If there is an accident, the Cover sorts it. If there are visitors to the Centre wanting a guided tour, the Cover sorts it . . . so on and so forth – a support person who is watchful rather than busy. I say a week's volunteering but what I really mean is a week of listening to some of the most heart rending, love filled, hope inducing stories I have heard in ages . . . a week of witnessing love in action as teenage boys are shown "good touching" by being taught to massage their mums; as young children experience gentle care at the hands of men when significant

male figures are either missing or are the cause of great pain in their lives . . . a week of leading and being led in simple acts of worship where the presence of God was palpable even when the name of God was never uttered. What joy – what unspeakable joy – and I am left wondering who was the volunteer here . . . me or the groups that came to Corrymeela? I certainly felt more cared for than caring – and the fire alarm never went off once!'

Sue Culver



Sue Culver is an ordained deacon in the Methodist Church of Great Britain where she is currently serving as Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order. She lives in York with her husband John and has four children. She became involved with Corrymeela in 2006 after bringing a group of mature students training for ordination on a summer school programme and never really left.

Corrymeela's Summer Programme would not be possible without:
The Nicholas Knatchbull Memorial Fund, administered by NSPCC
BBC Children in Need
Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister
WF Southall Trust
The Anchor Foundation
 and
The Enkalon Foundation
 Thank you very much!

Connecting Cultures

– glimpse a sunny summer week

25 JULY SAW THE CONNECTING CULTURES TEAM back at Corrymeela for a week of drama, dance, music, art and most of all, for maintaining the strong bonds that have formed within and between families who have taken part in our summer residential in previous years.

Forty-five people aged from two to 60+, supported by the Connecting Cultures team and the able and enthusiastic Corrymeela volunteers, explored the theme of The World. This was symbolised by a multi-cultural entrance created by everyone on the first night, and a large and not quite spherical globe (significant perhaps – we haven't quite managed perfection yet!). The families who took part came from North, East and West Belfast, from North Antrim, and from Sri Lanka, Syria and El Salvador. As the week began with 'What sort of world?', different cultural backgrounds, ways of dressing, lifestyles and beliefs were explored.

Each day had a colour, connected to a part of the universe, and underpinning the topic for the day. Learning was experiential and became more creative as confidence and friendships grew.

One of the highlights of the week was a visit from Margaret and Joan, who came to teach massage in the evening. This was a welcome end to a day of high-energy activity. What emerged



surprised us all. A group of boys aged 8 to 15 showed interest and aptitude, resulting in a follow-up session the following night. The boys then demonstrated their skills on their very appreciative parents, siblings, friends and volunteers. There are plans to follow this up with regular training that they can take back into their communities.

The last night saw the usual concert. This time however, with a difference that provided a blueprint we may follow from now on. The usual format is that the concert is a musical, dramatic and artistic representation of the week's work, under Stephen's very competent direction. This time participants had their own ideas for contributions. A programme was devised, but with the exception of two musical numbers with the full cast, each act was known beforehand only to those who took part. The talent and imagination showcased that night was thankfully recorded. Broadway here we come!

Corrymeela's Family Worker Rachel, the international volunteers, with Zora and Brónagh from Connecting Cultures, worked well as a team. Their vision and work together affirms and seeks a world of dignity and mutual loyalty for all.

Until next year, Rachel, Zora, Brónagh



Thank you for making Connecting Cultures possible!



A Year Volunteering at Corrymeela

I AM LILIAN OWENS from the Gambia. I was co-sponsored by the Methodist Church to do a one-year Scholarship and Leadership Training (SALT) Programme with Corrymeela. I can honestly say I have enjoyed every moment of it. It has not been easy coming from a third-world country to a very different cultural tradition, however I have loved the experiences totally.

When I was leaving home for Corrymeela I had little idea of where I was going. I was excited because it was the first time I was to be away for more than a week and my first time overseas. It was worth it because there is so much to learn from this experience. I will encourage anyone to volunteer in a place like Corrymeela because there is much more to it than you realise at first. I thought I knew what living in community was all about but there is always more to learn.

Corrymeela turned out to be one of the best things that ever happened to me. Going to bed exhausted but feeling more alive than ever. Looking forward to my day off and then immediately not being able to wait to go back to work. I enjoyed knowing that I was a part of something. Thanks to a simple hug or a present, I was able to bond with the kids in spite of the fact that I couldn't have profound conversations with them. I could not have



Lilian with Housekeeping Team Leader, Roisin



done this without being part of a bigger group.

From the beginning I felt welcomed and accepted. There were no conditions except mutual respect and a sensation of warmth, safety and protection. All of us felt the need to keep 'this welcome thing' going week after week, with volunteers and with the groups themselves.

Many people asked me why I chose to come to Northern Ireland. To be honest I have no idea, but I do believe that for everything there is a reason and a purpose. Whenever I am about to sink into the pit of worry, I look upward and begin praising God for all I have already been given. Then I claim victory over worry, confusion and anxiety, and replace these emotions with gratitude and a thankful heart. God responds to a grateful heart. His great power can sustain you no matter what your circumstances.

Perhaps one insight I would make is that while Corrymeela is a Christian community there was little opportunity for me to explore my Christian faith. This was hard because I desired to reflect on the physical practice and discuss the deeper spiritual meaning. I recommend that Corrymeela should offer more scheduled spiritual support for volunteers.

I have made so many friends from all over the world. I wish to thank each one for the love and support they gave me throughout the year, and I would like to thank the World Methodist Church Office in Britain, the Methodist Church in the Gambia and my family and friends at home for their support.

Lilian A. J. Owens

“
God
responds to
a grateful
heart
”

Conflict transformation by peaceful means

THE PEACE PEOPLE applaud the re-establishment of our Assembly at Stormont, and recognise that it is one of the signs of real hope for peace and reconciliation. The Peace People believe that the time is now right for making an executive minister within the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister responsible for sustaining the growth of a peaceful and non-violent society in Northern Ireland. The Minister for Peace would be responsible for ensuring that all Executive policies comply with an agreed agenda for peace and reconciliation. This would require minimal resources and would complement existing policies, such as those targeting social need and conflict transformation. However, it would help create a co-ordinated and coherent paradigm within the policy-making process for a sustainable peace in Northern Ireland. It would be part of a new architecture of peace that is urgently needed to solve the problems of conflict and violence at home and abroad. Creating a Minister for Peace would establish Northern Ireland's role as a world leader in the work of peace and reconciliation.

Global origins

The initiative for a Minister for Peace is inspired by the Charter for a World Without Violence. The Charter gives a step-by-step approach to reducing violence on a worldwide scale. It is also inspired by similar campaigns across the world; the Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments of Peace, which has 24 countries represented, including the UK, works to support and encourage the institutional expression of a culture of peace in governments around the world. Nepal, the Solomon Islands and the Regional Parliament of Calabria, Italy already have ministries of peace, and Costa Rica is expected to declare this year. There are campaigns for ministries or departments for peace in Uganda, Canada, Japan, Australia, Rwanda, Israel, Pakistan, USA, and Brazil, among others. Three international summits of the Global Alliance have been convened in London (2005), Victoria, Canada (2006) and Kiserazu, Japan (2007).

Seven priorities for NI Executive Minister for Peace

With a view to initiating debate we offer the following for further discussion:

- 1) Address the root causes and consequences of violence in society and recognise that these are manifest in many areas such as poverty, education, health, housing and the environment.
- 2) Create a more sustainable and balanced economy, based on a policy of ethical investment which addresses disparities in the distribution of wealth and inequalities in the workplace. Ensure that our peace-building efforts take full advantage of the opportunities for sustainable development, notably long-term investments in infrastructure and services.
- 3) Give Peace and Affective Education a more significant status in current education policy.
- 4) Train community workers dedicated to helping achieve conflict transformation within our society and thereby empower local communities to develop their own models for peace and reconciliation.
- 5) When justice powers are devolved, transform prison policy to ensure the emphasis is on rehabilitation and education.
- 6) Lobby the UK Government to uphold its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.
- 7) Promote a culture of peace through community-based initiatives that bring together groups and individuals from all sections of our society. Move beyond violence and begin to create a community that fosters engaged citizenship.

For more information on the campaign, upcoming events and how to get involved, contact:

The Peace People
Fredheim, 224 Lisburn Road,
Belfast, Northern Ireland BT9 6GE

Tel. and Fax: 028 90663465
Email: info@peacepeople.com
Website: www.peacepeople.com

**DO YOU
THINK N.I.
SHOULD
HAVE A
MINISTER
FOR PEACE?
WRITE AND LET
US KNOW.**

Ray Davey – A prophet of the Twentieth Century



Fáithe an Fichiú hAois
[Prophets of the Twentieth Century]

by Séamus Ware

Published in Irish by Foilseacháin Ábhair Spioradálta, Dublin 2007.

SÉAMUS WARE TELLS US that the biblical prophets looked critically at the society around them from the viewpoint of God's covenant with Israel. They knew God's purpose and were prepared to speak out against what was wrong. They enable us to ponder deeply about our experience and to see the inescapable consequences of present action.

In this book Séamus Ware makes his personal choice of twelve prophets of the twentieth century. Their emphases are on equality, freedom for every race and class, the environment, ecumenism, peace and reconciliation, new models of Church, the place of women.

He introduces us to old and new friends. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Oscar Romero, Barbara Ward, Corrie Ten Boom, Helder Camara, Niall O'Brien, Roger Schutz, Ray Davey, Chiara Lubich, Jean Vanier. We see something of each person's character, we

understand a little of the social context in which they lived, we learn the problems that they faced and share the vision that inspired them. Out of this comes a clearer understanding of the issues which faced the Church in the last century and we can see more clearly where we stand today.

Most readers of this magazine would open the book at the story of Ray Davey. Séamus Ware tells how Ray became a prisoner of war and how the bombing of Dresden revealed the inevitable tragedy that comes when relationships are broken between nations or where there is total absence of community or human understanding.

Séamus Ware tells how in 1985 Ray came back to Dresden with his wife, Kathleen. Ray spoke at a service in the Kreuzkirche, telling how he and his fellow prisoners shared the pain of those who suffered in the allied bombing raids of 1945 when 300,000 people were killed. 'But now in 1985,' he said, 'they were united in reconciliation.' The writer goes on – I give his Irish text –

'An lá dár gcionn tugadh ticéid dóibh don Cheoláras, a bhí athoscailte díreach 40 bliain tar éis a bheith scriosta sna haer-ruathair. Bhí bean ina suí taobh le Kathleen agus ag sos sa cheoldráma, labhair sí léi. D'inis sí go raibh sise agus a fear chéile ag an tseirbhís sa Kreuzkirche agus gur aithin sí muintir Davey. Bhí a fear chéile tar éis a mháthair, deartháir óg agus beirt seantuismitheoirí a chailleadh sna haer-ruathair. Riamh ó shin bhí fuath agus nimh aige in aghaidh na mBreatach agus na Meiricanach. Ach ag an tseirbhís, bhraith

Author Séamus Ware has been a friend of Corrymeela for many years and is a member of Corrymeela's Dublin cell group.



Barbara Ward



Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Corrie Ten Boom



Ray Davey



Oscar Romero

sé corraithe, thosaigh sé ag gol, agus thuig sé gurbh fheidir leis maithiúnas a thabhairt.'

[The next day they were given tickets for the Opera House which had just been re-opened exactly forty years after its destruction in the air raids. A woman was sitting next to Kathleen and they spoke together. She said that she had recognised the Daveys because she and her husband had been at the service in the Kreuzkirche. Her husband had lost his mother, his young brother and two of his grandparents in the air raids. Ever since, he had been filled with bitterness and hatred toward the British and the Americans. But at that service he began to weep for he had come to understand that it was possible for him to forgive.]

In vivid prose like this, Séamus Ware points out how we can learn from the past century and perhaps how we may make some contribution to the world of Century 21. He gives us the words of Karl Barth to students from Northern Ireland, Ray among them, who asked, 'What can we do for peace?' Barth's answer: 'Go home and put your own house in order.'

The value of this book is in the wide range of people and situations that it covers. His study of Barbara Ward raises the issue of the rich and the poor nations. She stated bluntly in 1962 that the rich nations must give at least 1 per cent of their gross national product to the poor nations.

Did they do it? She hammered home the moral principle, if we believe that all people are of equal value how can we be content when people are hungry, suffering from famine and disease, although we have the means to put their situation right?

A devout Catholic, Barbara Ward found that our economic system does not reflect the things we say we believe in – duty, equality, human dignity, respect, neighbourliness, brotherly love. We praise love of country, but will our minds ever encompass a patriotism that extends to the whole of 'Space-ship Earth'? Barbara Ward insisted that justice must come first, and the good of the nation-state afterwards. That is the true 'principle of subsidiarity'.

Several of Séamus Ware's prophets were what we used to call 'missionaries'. Niall O'Brien developed Base Christian Communities in the Philipines where the missionary identified totally with his or her people, being completely immersed in their problems – hunger, sickness, unemployment, loneliness. In base communities, people pray and work together to get rid of injustice and to forge reconciliation. Slowly self-reliance, independence, personal identity are achieved.

It is against such a background that we see the heroism of ordinary Christian men and women and we realise how still today the Cross is not a metaphor but a reality. 'It is a plain question of being loyal or not being loyal to the mission of Jesus Christ. The fact is it is dangerous to be a Christian in Aguilares,' said Fr Rutilio Grande, one of Archbishop Romero's priests in El Salvador. Shortly afterwards he was killed. The power of big business and the state sometimes has to be challenged. Romero changed from being a quiet, conservative cleric into a courageous hero who spoke out boldly. 'A church that is not prepared to criticise the injustice practiced against the poor is not a true church of Jesus Christ.' At the same time he was saying that the Church's message is based on love. 'I want to say to those who murder, that we love them. The Church does not call anyone "enemy".' In 1980 he spoke out against government troops shooting citizens. 'We are your people. If you hear the command to kill people, remember the command of God, you shall not kill.' Shortly after that he too was shot.

Each of these twelve 'prophets' has something important to say and each one has a character that speaks more clearly than words. In some ways the sheer excitement of these stories reminds us of those missionary heroes like David Livingstone, Father Damien or Mary Slessor that used to inspire us. And why not? Séamus Ware deserves the gratitude of his readers. When can we have this book in English?

Reviewed by Bill Boyd

“

the Cross is not a metaphor but a reality

”

Bill Boyd is a retired Presbyterian minister who worked in the Eglinton congregation of North Belfast. A founding member of Corrymeela, he resigned from the Community on taking up his post in Eglinton in 1967. He and his wife Mabel have continued as Friends. He is involved in the monthly Irish Language service of worship in Fitzroy Presbyterian Church with the inter-church group "An Tor ar Lasadh" [The Burning Bush].



Martin Luther King



Dorothy Day



Jean Vanier



Chiara Lubich



Roger Schutz



Ballycastle Open Events

Promoting Wellbeing

12–14 December

A weekend of finding ways to relax. With the many stresses and tensions each of us experiences in life, this weekend is an invitation to get away and treat yourself. Led by Rachel Craig, Corrymeela Family Programme Worker. Cost: £76 waged, £66 unwaged.



Christmas Open Day

14 December (2.00 pm to 6.00 pm)

An open day for families including Christmas singing, music, arts and crafts, storytelling and drama. There is no admission charge and all are welcome, so why not plan to visit Santa this year at Corrymeela and bring all the family?



Big Sing

17 January

Rescheduled from 15 November 2008.

Come and sing songs from across the globe at this fantastic musical celebration. Led by Cwiti Green, Iona, and Andrew Chew.



Dialogue for Peaceful Change

8–13 February

Learn new skills about conflict management, mediation and facilitation of groups. You will gain new understanding about why conflict happens and ways of moving through it. The course is well-balanced with both theory and practice. Cost: £300.



Sixth Form Conference

18–20 February

A conference for 17- and 18-year-olds to learn about citizenship and to come together to explore identity, sectarianism, prejudice, culture and heritage using 'Facing History and Ourselves' resources. Led by Ciara McFarlane, Corrymeela Schools Worker.

St Patrick's Weekend

13–15 March

A weekend to explore Celtic Christianity and the life of St Patrick. Led by Dick Rice.

Interfaith Service Weekend

20–22 March

Join other young adults from different faith backgrounds for community service work, discussions, reflections and making new friends.

Easter Conference

10–12 April

This weekend will be hosted by Corrymeela's 18- to 25-year-olds programme, People Understanding Borders (PUB). This event is open for anyone 18–25 to attend, and PUB participants are also inviting a number of their peers. Led by Corrymeela Youth Worker Ivan Cross, the theme of the conference is to be confirmed.



Radical Love

15–17 May

A retreat for members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities to explore issues of faith and spirituality in context with personal sexuality. Led by Padraig Twomy.

Ballycastle Friends Weekend

15–17 May

Save the date for what's always a fun-filled weekend. If you have thought about coming along before, now is the time to plan ahead and come visit!

Knocklayd Open Events

Thomas Merton Weekend

17–19 October

On the 40th anniversary of his death, we will use the life and work of Thomas Merton as a starting point for silence, prayer, contemplation and personal reflection. Led by Brendan McAllister and Una Lount, Corrymeela Community members.

Time Out – A Time to Reflect on Reconciliation

24–26 October

An expressive, creative retreat weekend led by Charlie and Beryl Leeke and Kate Graham, Corrymeela Community.

The Grief Journey

14–16 November

A weekend providing support, understanding and advice through the grief and loneliness of bereavement. Led by Ivan Bell, Corrymeela Community and the Knocklayd team.

Christmas Preparation at Knocklayd

5–7 December

With a bit of everything, there will be spiritual meditations and discussion, crafts, song, and of course decorations at this special Advent retreat to prepare for Christmas.

Belfast Open Events

Book Launch – The Place Called Reconciliation

29 October (5.30 pm to 7.00 pm)

Union Theological College, Belfast

All are welcome to join us for the launch of Dr David Stevens' new book, *The Place Called Reconciliation: Texts to Explore*. Hear David share his thoughts over a cup of tea or coffee.

Cuppa Corrymeela Fundraiser

7 November (10.00 am to 3.00 pm)

Corrymeela House, Belfast

Have a cup of coffee with us! We are holding Corrymeela's first coffee morning fundraiser for our capital campaign. It is open house so if you are in the area, join us and bring a friend.



CORRYMEELA begins when you leave....



FOR THE CORRYMEELA LONG-TERM RESIDENTIAL VOLUNTEERS the end of August marks not only the end of Corrymeela's busy Summer Programme but also the end of their volunteering journey here in Northern Ireland. It has been a remarkable year for the team of nine young volunteers who, coming from different backgrounds, countries and cultures, have made their own unique contribution to life and work at the Corrymeela Centre in Ballycastle during the past 12 months. It has been both joyful and tearful, and at times the pace has been hectic, yet there has also been the space to enjoy the beauty and tranquillity of north Antrim.

Having followed a structured training programme for the past 12 months the team have now equipped themselves with the essential life and work skills around peace-building and conflict transformation. Specifically they can now plan and design group programmes, lead out and facilitate group activities (such as team building exercises, discussions, and experiential learning activities), safely and in a creative way work with children and young adults of all ages, as well as reflect upon their own learning and development. They have developed skills, knowledge and attitudes relating to peace-building and reconciliation work which

they can carry with confidence into their careers and family life back home.

We have a saying inscribed above the doorway at the Ballycastle Centre which reads 'Corrymeela begins when you leave'. We trust that the 2007/08 volunteer team will share their skills and learning with their own communities both here in Northern Ireland and in their own countries. Each volunteer will, in their own way – whether that be in their local youth club, church, community association or sports club – be able to bring something new, different and challenging from their experience at Corrymeela to other people back home. It is our wish that as peacemakers and reconcilers they will continue to make their own unique contribution.

We wish them well and we will miss them around the Centre – their warmth, vitality and energy, their welcome, their smiling faces. However we know from experience that they will stay in touch and return to visit Corrymeela in the future. For them it's simply the end of a short chapter, and the beginning of a much longer journey.

**Robert Deignan,
Volunteer Co-ordinator**





I'll never forget



I BEGAN TO EXPLORE MY IDENTITY as a writer at a weekend on Knocklayd Mountain in the Glens of Antrim. This open event was provided by the Corrymeela Community and facilitated by Damien Gorman, who said, "There is something both public and private about creative writing – even if that writing is not made for other people. "Raising the Voice" is a weekend of workshops which explore how these public and private elements can benefit each other, raising the confidence of the writer, and the reach of her or his voice.'

Damien's work has received national and international acclaim; he has won many prestigious awards including an MBE for Services to the Arts. He is also the founding director of An Crann (the Tree) which helps people tell and hear the stories of Northern Ireland's Troubles.

The following is an example of my thoughts that weekend:

I'll never forget the day Granda was buried. It rained so all the neighbouring farmers could come. All the men in their black coats and umbrellas standing outside the house and all the women inside. Granny and her sisters watching him being carried out of the house and down the long lane. Even when they had gone, I stood in my red dress and cried, promising to take care of granny. I was fifteen and all these years have passed and I'm letting go, moving on, still tied to her heartstrings but feeling less responsible. Handing the baton back to her sons. I don't want to be a heroine, a martyr, a carer; I just want to be her granddaughter.

Hold her hand as she prepares to leave this world, pray with her to ease her worried brow. Let her go – to him who is waiting for her, her sweetheart, her husband. When she went out to work he made the dinner for her, when we watched the horseracing drinking stout, she sewed. I will always love her but what will I do when she's gone? Cry for her or for me?

I'll never forget.

These words, among others, became a release and are recorded in my diary. I had been keeping a journal for 20 years but hadn't embraced the writer persona. I was a painter – surely they didn't mix?

But I found that when I painted first, the words then flowed. I found the subconscious bubbled to the surface, resulting in something of an art journal.

Using a different medium helps me to reflect on my non-verbal expressions. I can unload my worries and hopes onto the page. I can pick up a pen anywhere, anytime and find immediate satisfaction.

I normally write at the end of the day and it helps me process all that has happened and wind down. Once it's down on paper it's no longer in my head and for my own mental health this has been a great gift.

I think the writing weekend helped me find my voice. I realise I must be writing for a reader even if that's just me a few years later. Now I want to dance and sing as well and explore all aspects of my creative side. I think to address my own diverse range of emotions and feelings will help me in my work, life and quest for peace.

Joanne Robinson

After ending her career as a fashion designer in Paris, Joanne came to Corrymeela in 1994. Since then she has served as a summer volunteer; long term volunteer; Programme Resource Co-ordinator and community member. She was active in setting up the Infinity cell group in 1999 for younger members to stay involved. Now Joanne uses her creativity working as a full-time Art Therapist with the Ulster Cancer Foundation.





‘Troubles’ in Pakistan: Lessons forgotten?

IT'S COMPLICATED . . . very complicated.

After two years of living and working in Pakistan that is the most sweeping statement I can make about this country. We (my wife and I) came here with both fear and hope – fear that we would find truth in the western perception of this place as a hotbed of Islamic extremism; and hope that we would find the opposite – an inspiring, peace-loving people dedicated to a much mis-portrayed religion. In the end, we have experienced elements of both; Pakistan is such a diverse country that every single shade of opinion can be found here, so much so that it defies the application of stereotypes.

Ireland, especially Northern Ireland, is not very well known here, but there are certain ‘lightbulb moments’ – a typical introduction goes something like this:

‘Where are you from?’

‘Ireland.’

‘Holland?’

‘No, Ireland . . . you know . . . Cricket World Cup 2007,’ (cruel but most Pakistanis have a good sense of humour).

‘Ah . . . Ireland. Do you know Gerry Adams?’

Gerry Adams is considered to be a freedom fighter here, struggling to throw off the yoke of British oppression just as Pakistan/India did. Nice to know that oversimplifying other people’s conflicts is a global phenomenon! My response of ‘It’s actually a little more complicated than that,’ is often met with disappointment, often with deep interest and I’ve had many long conversations about our own conflict.

The current ‘war on terror’ dispensation has thrust Pakistan centre stage and threatens to tear the country apart as forces supporting and opposing the government’s alignment with US foreign policy vie for control. Few would argue that religious extremism is not a living and growing phenomenon in Pakistan, however there is a dearth of analysis of the root causes.

Certainly there is a religious aspect to this problem and one of the things that has struck me most is how the patterns of change in theological discourse are so similar between Islam and Christianity. For example, there is a centuries-old division in Islamic thought between those who follow a strict, literalist interpretation of the religious text and those who prefer a more mystical interpretation using complex rituals, saints and symbolism to help them worship. Sound familiar? And recent trends are similar too – over the last century or so, a new, super-literalist and very exclusive theology has emerged which has gradually moved from being considered a dangerous deviance to becoming part of the mainstream theological discourse. This has been at the expense of centuries-old culture, art and thought, such as the Sufism (mystical Islam) of the Indian subcontinent. Again, to me it seems remarkably similar to what has happened in Christianity – especially in relation to some US evangelical movements (and our own local equivalents). Even cable TV trends are similar – they have a channel here called ‘Peace TV’ which I swear could be copied and pasted into the US channel God TV, with a few alterations.

Nevertheless, this virulent brand of theology is only the spark in this conflict. The fuel for the fire is the deep social injustice and political repression that have prevented all but an elite few Pakistanis from achieving the life that they desire for themselves and their families. In this country, 74 per cent of the population still lives on less than \$2 a day and adult literacy, at around 60 per cent, is the worst in South Asia and worse than some African countries. Continual under-investment in the public education system has allowed a huge system of ‘madrassas’ (religious schools) to fill the void. These schools are free and are often the only option for poor families – unfortunately the curriculum often involves little more than learning how to recite the Qu’ran in Arabic.

Exacerbating this is the fact that the international community has rarely played a positive role here – from the legacy of British colonialism, to the US bank-rolling of Islamic militants in the 1970s and 80s to fight in the Afghan war, to the current billions that go largely in support of the Pakistani military, an institution that is doing all it can to ensure democracy does not take root, lest it lose its monumental political and economic power. Little wonder that Islamic militancy is gaining ground with a flow of brainwashed volunteers, desperate through lack of economic opportunities, angry at their exclusion from society and driven by the promise that their family will be looked after when they are gone.

Pakistan is not a country where religious extremism has a natural home; it is still a relatively new phenomenon and has taken the country’s moderate majority by surprise. Many Pakistanis are



fearful for the future. A fact little considered in the west is that the majority of victims in the ‘war on terror’ are not residents of New York or London, rather they are poor Pakistanis, Afghans and Iraqis who were in the wrong place at the wrong time. In 2007 Pakistan suffered more suicide bombings than all the other years of its history – combined.

Western governments, especially the British government and the European Union, being major donors to Pakistan, have a lot of influence over this situation. Surely if there is one lesson we all learnt from our own conflict it is that there can be no military solution. The underlying causes must be addressed. And yet it is hard to escape the conclusion that governments who should know better are making the same mistakes again. Maybe it’s time we reminded them . . .

Paul works for Trócaire in Pakistan as Pakistan Programme Officer. This involves managing all of Trócaire’s work in Pakistan, which is implemented through more than 20 local partner organisations. This includes assessing and approving projects, carrying out monitoring visits around the country, providing training to partners and giving advice on the strategic direction of partners’ work. Trócaire’s work in Pakistan currently encompasses the following areas:

- Abolition of bonded labour (a form of slavery prevalent in Pakistan and other South Asian countries)
- Women’s empowerment, focusing on the issue of violence against women
- Earthquake recovery – ongoing response to the earthquake of October 2005 which killed more than 70,000 people
- Disaster risk reduction – helping communities in disaster-prone areas better prepare for and reduce their vulnerability to future disasters.

Lea also works in the development sector and for the past two years has been working for a local women’s rights organisation, Rozan, in Islamabad, focusing on the issue of violence against women. Paul and Lea are moving to the Democratic Republic of Congo in October. Paul will be taking up a new job with Trócaire there.



Paul Braithwaite, 29 years old, from Dunmurry, Belfast. Married to Lea O’Neill, 28, half Irish (Dublin), half Belgian. Paul’s parents are Corrymeela Community members.

And who is my neighbour?

(Luke 10:29)

Neighbours

I hear the Corrymeela bell
I hear it every day
Nostalgic sound, it would be so
For folk gone far away
Bells still affect our daily lives
As they did long ago
No high-tech gadgets take their place
We hear them and we know
They can be loud and boisterous
To dominate us all
A tiny tinkle, nonetheless
Can quiet a noisy hall
Big Ben is harsh and final
Preoccupied with time
St Albans bells were gentle
I loved to hear them chime
I hear the Corrymeela bell
Its reassuring sound
Conveys to me, across the fields
Good folk are still around

Joe is a retired dentist
and a neighbour
of Corrymeela.
He has worked
alongside Alastair and
Heather Kilgore in
Corrymeela's Golden
Garden for years.

Joe Kennedy



Catch up with Corrymeela



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www.corrymeela.org

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