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Corrymeela



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These biblical reflections on reconciliation and related themes have been written out of the author's 40 years of involvement in the Corrymeela Community. The particular setting of Northern Ireland has meant that 'reconciliation' has emerged as the Community's overarching narrative for understanding the many facets of the conflict. **Written by David Stevens, Leader of the Corrymeela Community. £6.99**
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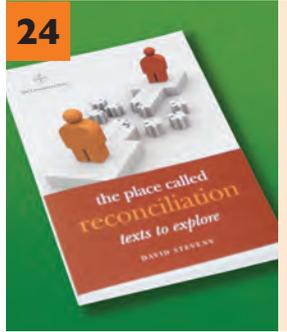
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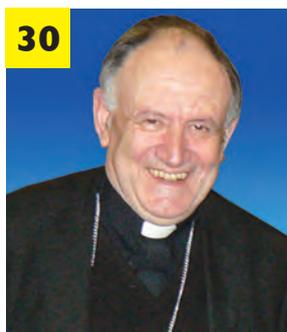
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The cult of victimhood

BEING A VICTIM or defending victims are the places to be in the modern world. It is what makes criticism of Israel so difficult. How can you criticise people who have six million victims? It is what gives victims' groups in Northern Ireland so much potency.

Increasingly, we can only justify violence if we are defending victims or if we have been a victim. So, arguments are cast in this light. Israel justifies its violence in Gaza because it is the 'victim' of Hamas aggression. Hamas glorifies victimhood and martyrdom at the hands of Israel. What we get is the parallel suffering of Jews and Arabs, but never meeting. A shrill rhetoric of innocent self-righteousness abounds. And we have a competition in victimhood. The role and identity of 'victim' are profoundly seductive.

In today's world we have a much greater sensitivity to victims and excluded groups, and that is the working of the Gospel through history. However, this 'knowledge' can be misused and is misused – and that is an aspect of the persistence of sin. One of the most subtle aspects of sin is the misuse of the good to give us righteousness – that is what Jesus was accusing the Pharisees of. The 'knowledge' of the victim is misused.

Another 'good' in our modern world is human rights, and the rhetoric of human rights and victimhood overlap. Rowan Williams points out that:

The concentration on rights as the primary focus of political action is a response to the long and appalling history of inequity, the denial to certain groups of a voice of their own, a freedom of self-determination or self-definition. To stand against the pursuit of such freedom is to collude with oppression. The difficulty is that the pursuit of enforceable claims requires me or us, the claimants, to present ourselves as victims, and to quarry our history for suffering in a way that can isolate us further from each other, can even produce the unhappy effect of a kind of competitiveness in suffering ('Our history is more tragic than yours ...'). The macro-political effects of this can be seen in the competing narratives of different groups in the Balkans or central Africa or the Middle East; the micro-political in the bitter and complex tensions of minority and disadvantaged groups in urban North America (what agenda can be agreed between Afro-Americans, women, Hispanics, gay men, gay women,

Asians?'). (Lost Icons, p.85)

We can see the rise of competitive victimhood between the two main communities in Northern Ireland. And human rights rhetoric feeds into this culture of victimhood.

What we all want to be is the pure victim, or people helping pure victims – this is the illusionary stand for human innocence and being 'better' than other people.

What we do not want to do is examine our role, or our community's, or our nation's role, in victimisation. Nor explore how victims can often be victimisers. Nor explore how we can sometimes help create victimisers. Israel will not talk about how its actions over decades have helped to create Hamas. Or Hamas how its actions help create victims in its 'own' community. Nor will both sides talk about the reality that hurting and oppression (which create victims) have more value than negotiation. Nor will Unionists talk about how injustice and sectarianism over decades helped create the IRA. Nor will the Republican movement talk about the victims its 'war' created (particularly in its 'own' community), or even about the legitimacy of the 'war'. These are the sorts of silences that need to be broken – but they will chasten us or make us uncomfortable. This is what dealing with the past really means and it will be interesting to see if the recommendations of the Consultative Group on the Past will be considered in this light.

Victims are no better or worse than other people – what marks them out is what happened to them – that is 'fact'. It is how people deal with that 'fact', and how people and society help them deal with that 'fact' that is important. Victims may get 'lost' in victimhood, create an identity out of victimhood, be (rightfully) angry about what has happened, be traumatised, need justice and/or truth, recover (or not), move on (or not), and so on. But we should not romanticise the victim or work that is done with them.

David Stevens

Rowan Williams extract take from -
Lost Icons: Reflections on Cultural Bereavement



David Stevens is the Leader of the Corrymeela Community



Thankful for friendship

IT HAS BEEN A TIME OF CHANGE for Corrymeela with the loss of remarkable people such as Kathleen Davey and John Morrow whose friendship is remembered on pages 20 -22. Sadly they are only two of several Corrymeela members and friends who have passed away recently. Speaking to family members and friends I am struck by the similarities of their characters irrespective of their roles. They shared qualities of faith, wisdom, humour, energy and above all a belief in people. This issue is packed with inspirational people and their stories each demonstrating that these qualities live on in abundance through the people and work of Corrymeela – a fitting legacy indeed. Why not share your memories and Corrymeela experiences or make new ones at the forth coming Friends and

Members Weekend 15-17th May 2009. Make this the year you visit our Centre in Ballycastle. Time and friends are precious.

Jo Watson
Editor

Thank you to our corporate donors for their support.



LISA HAIR DESIGN BELFAST

FRIENDS WEEKEND 15-17 MAY 2009

Join us at the Corrymeela Ballycastle Centre for the Friends' Weekend 2009

- Learn more about peace-building in Northern Ireland and Corrymeela's work for reconciliation.
- Consider the lessons for our own local churches and communities.

If you would like to attend the Corrymeela Friends' Weekend 2009 please complete and return the form with a £20 deposit (or full payment) to Corrymeela House, 8 Upper Crescent, Belfast, BT7 1NT. For further information or if you have any queries please contact the Corrymeela Belfast office on 028 9050 8080 or email: belfast@corrymeela.org

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I will be present for a light meal on Friday at 7.30 pm

I require a seat on the bus from 8 Upper Crescent on Friday at 6pm

I wish to have vegetarian meals

I have other dietary / medical needs Please state:

Lets hear what some of our readers think...

As a lay person, I would like to pay tribute to Dr David Stevens on his new book *The Place Called Reconciliation: Texts to explore*. This is a very user-friendly book with short familiar bible passages and a very good sharing of his understanding of the text for today. I've used it at small group worship and for personal meditation. An example of the challenges the gospel holds for us is in David's book on page 117, 'Healing'. Do we really want to be healed? Are we ready to make the changes in our own lives that our healing will command? Sometimes we can enjoy the status of our dysfunction. The blind man at the pool would have to be accountable for his actions after he was healed – he could no longer spend his days by the pool, thus Jesus asks him 'do you want to be healed?'. The 'peace' settlement at Stormont is going to need some radical changes in our personal attitudes before real peace will be experienced but we are on the journey and must encourage each other.

Thank you, David. We need spiritual nourishment in our busy lives today and this fulfils my need. It challenges me to try to live the gospel more.

Congratulations to the team who produce the Corrymeela magazine. It is a great way of sharing the Good News in today's busy world and refreshing in its sharing of a variety of points of view.

Yours sincerely,
Maeve Walsh, Ballycastle

In several places where we stayed in Ireland we mentioned the work of Corrymeela and everybody knew of it and was

supportive. Our prayers are for its continued outreach: the contacts with the English towns and the sympathetic view of the divisions of Israel/Palestine in the magazines show that the work has in its influence stretched a long way.

We can only hope that the economic downturn does not set back the work of reconciliation between communities, but we are sure that Corrymeela will continue to heal the breached in the name of Christ.

With all good wishes,
Mr and Mrs A. Sayles,
Chelmsford

The last issue reviewed the success of Corrymeela's 2008 Summer Festival. It was moving to be in the audience when Shriver addressed the crowd on public commemoration and amnesia.

Speaking to that which is dear to my heart, Shriver talked eloquently about how members of society carry with them the memories and spirits of the past. Shriver posed questions about 'joint' public mourning for the people of Northern Ireland.

Shriver questioned – 'Is there a public memorial design that does justice to all sides of the conflict and/or which expands public empathy for 'the other side?' – I don't know. I would welcome responses to the Linen Memorial, www.linenmemorial.org, a 'living' memorial, created since 2001.

Dr Lycia Trouton, Sydney,
Australia



I write in response to your request on the Letters page of the Autumn 2008 Corrymeela News. Please find enclosed photos of a reasonably recent me, and a very young me, as a Volunteer Driver on the 1975 Summer Programme (co-ordinator Norman Richardson – remember him?). Coming straight from the graduation ceremony at Nottingham, I was driving the minibuses around Antrim and down to Belfast for seven weeks, with Desi patching up the odd broken window and holey exhaust pipe. I was also to be seen in Anna's kitchen every week (then a general gathering place and rest room for the volunteers), ironing my famous pink handkerchiefs (result of an accident with a red T-shirt). I came back on summer work camps for several years, and seem to remember a couple of volunteers called David Stevens and Matilde Schaer. Now, whatever happened to them? Also cycled from Larne ferry for a week-long Summerfest.

Since then, among other things, I've worked as a senior micro-computer technician at Wolverhampton University, half trained as a nurse (until the arthritis set in), and now

drive minibuses (again) for a Day Centre for disabled Afro-Caribbean elders. Oh, and I've bought a large mis-treated house which I'm very slowly making fit to take in lodgers. Plus trustee of a local Quaker home for the elderly. Plus I'm cycling everywhere and keenly reading Corrymeela News with its memory-stimulating photographs.

Did Corrymeela change my life? Well, an advert on a Corrymeela notice-board put me in touch with USPG "Root Groups", which brought me to Wolverhampton, where I've lived ever since (the people are very friendly). And a Corrymeela study camp, "Who do you think you are"? led to me escaping from a job in a very boring design office. So yes!

Yours faithfully
Paul Ryaner,
Wolverhampton



Ballycastle Open Events

St Patrick's Weekend Retreat

Friday 13 – Sunday 15 March

The Wind at Our Backs:
The Celtic Spirit in All Creation.
Explore Celtic Spirituality, ranging from the Trinity to thin places, from solitude to community, from High crosses to the Breastplate Prayer. There will be presentations and sharing, as well as time for reflection, prayer and worship. Led by Dick Rice, former Jesuit priest, and Rosemarie Whithead, former Franciscan sister.

Interfaith Service Weekend

Friday 20 – Sunday 22 March

Join other young adults from different faith backgrounds for community service work, discussions, reflections and making new friends. Led by Corrymeela, and modelled on the Interfaith Youth Core programme.

Easter Youth Conference

Friday 10 – Sunday 12 April

A weekend residential programme for 18 – 25 year olds, this is a great opportunity to make friends and be introduced to Corrymeela's work. The programme will be designed and led by young people in Corrymeela's existing People Understanding Borders (PUB) group, assisted by Corrymeela Youth Coordinator, Ivan Cross.

Radical Love

Friday 15 – Sunday 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.

Corrymeela Friends Weekend

Friday 15 – Sunday 17 May

A fun-filled weekend of fellowship, study and learning for friends of the Corrymeela Community. All are welcome.

Knocklayd Open Events

A Quiet Lenten Retreat

Friday 6 – Sunday 8 March

Christ said, 'Come away with Me and rest awhile'. Led by Gerry Cassidy, CSSR and Anne Jack, Corrymeela Community.

Lenten Quiet Days

Wednesday 11/18/25 March 2009

Seasonal Reflection in Knocklayd. All are welcome.

Gardening Weekend

Friday 3 – Sunday 5 April

Enjoy a weekend working in Knocklayd's beautiful gardens in exchange for food and accommodation. Led by Kate Graham, Carol Press, and the Corrymeela Community.

Parents, Children and Sexual Identity

Friday 17 – Sunday 19 April

A weekend, led by parents, for parents struggling with issues around the sexual identity of a son or daughter. Led by Una Lount, Brian Treacy, and the Corrymeela Community.

Raising the Voice

Friday 1 – Sunday 3 May

The Knocklayd writers invite you to their writing weekend. Led by Damien Gorman, acclaimed writer.

Painting for Pleasure

Friday 29 – Sunday 31 May

These weekends are for those who enjoy painting/art and wish to experience the changing seasonal beauty of Knocklayd and Glenshesk. Led by Raymond Bakewell and the Corrymeela Community.

Knocklayd Open Day

Saturday 6 June • 10.30am – 5.00pm

We invite you to experience the best of the Knocklayd Centre. Join us for all, or part of the day.

Writing for Pleasure – 'Just Write'

Friday 26 – Sunday 28 June

A weekend of reminiscing for those who would like to begin, or continue, to write 'My own life story'. Led by Corrymeela community members Una Lount and Gill Michael.

Belfast Open Events

Sample a Little Taste of India

Friday 27 February • 7.00pm – 9.00pm

The Indian Community Centre

Sample a little bit of India. Join us for an Indian Evening at the Indian Community Centre, 86 Clifton Street, Belfast in aid of Vishwas Udgirkar's volunteer year with Corrymeela. Tickets are available at £10 from Corrymeela House, telephone 028 9050 8080 and will include food.



Coffee and buns all round

WITH A DASH OF SUGAR and a pinch of love, the staff of Corrymeela House and a few generous community members baked a delicious array of cakes, tray bakes and sweet treats to nibble at Corrymeela's Coffee Fundraiser, 7 November 2008. Members, friends, volunteers and even local businesses showed their support by stopping in throughout the day for a warm cup of coffee or tea. By forgoing a trip to the

neighbourhood cafés and instead buying a homemade bun from Corrymeela, a terrific £700 was raised for completion of the New Coventry Building. Thank you to all who participated, for supporting our investment into modernising Corrymeela's facilities for sustained peace and reconciliation work into the future.

South Belfast Cell group rose magnificently to the coffee morning challenge and raised £500



to support the furnishing of Coventry. We are grateful to them and all their friends for the generous contribution, especially Pauline McCann and the late John Morrow.

If you would like to host

your own coffee morning please contact Bernie Magill at Corrymeela House, Belfast Tel 028 9050 8080 to get your Corrymeela mugs, pens and magazines.

Corrymeela awarded international peace prize

THE COVENTRY INTERNATIONAL PRIZE FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION was awarded to the Corrymeela Community on 14 November 2008



*Bishop Christopher Cocksworth
Bishop of Coventry*

in the Cathedral ruins on the 68th anniversary of the destruction of the city and Cathedral. Corrymeela Leader David Stevens accepted the prestigious award saying, 'It is a real privilege to accept this International Peace Prize in this city of reconciliation. And there can be no more fitting a backdrop than these ruins of the old Cathedral where the Coventry Litany of Reconciliation is recited each weekday, and beside the new Cathedral which has arisen from brokenness and destruction.'

Corrymeela became a Cross of Nails Centre in September 1971 but the connection goes much further and deeper than that. The

Coventry Cross of Nails Network largely funded the building Coventry House to provide accommodation for volunteers and staff at Corrymeela. Dr Stevens remarks, 'This building was opened in 1976 and it expressed an audacity to hope in dark times. It was a house where the sharing of life has thrown many Northern Irish young people into contact with their contemporaries from other cultures through living and learning together in community.'

Corrymeela recently rebuilt its volunteer accommodation and continues to call it Coventry House to recognise the Coventry connection, and the support received over the years from people and places in England.

Sad news

WE ARE SAD to announce the death of Ann Varma, John Martin, Ita McMichael and David McCrory.

Ann was a founding member of the Reading Link and came over as a summer volunteer to Corrymeela for twenty five years until 1999.

John Martin was the first co-ordinator of the Corrymeela Link in Reading, England and was a former Corrymeela Member.

Ita was associated with Corrymeela from its early days, helping to organise entertainment for visiting groups and fostering links with local traditional musicians and dancers.

David McCrory was a senior youth worker with Southern Education Library Board and will be deeply missed by everyone at our Ballycastle Centre.

Book launch packs a full house

PEOPLE FILLED OUT the aisles of the distinguished Union Theological library on Wednesday 29 October 2008 for the launch of Dr David Stevens' new book, *The Place Called Reconciliation: Texts to explore*. The biblical reflections on reconciliation and related themes in this book have been written out of the author's 40 years of involvement in the

Corrymeela Community. The particular setting of Northern Ireland has meant that 'reconciliation' has emerged as the Community's overarching narrative for understanding the many facets of the conflict. Clergymen and lay people alike showed their interest by attending the event.

Speaking at the launch Bishop Tony Farquhar applauded the

valuable contribution of the book, stating, 'This book challenges the reader to think and act differently, living on the far side of revenge.'

Dr Stevens concluded by quoting from the book, 'The Bible represents a record of an ongoing encounter and dialogue between God and human beings. In that encounter and dialogue there are critique and challenge,

and there is a profound search for understanding – of justice, violence, suffering and what it means to be human, and the answers are often plural and contested... often open-ended... We are summoned into the presence of revelation, as Moses stood before the burning bush. Scripture is not really a text but an activity: Come and hear, and be changed.'



L-R: Bishop Tony Farquhar, Dr David Stevens and Kate Pettis



Many thanks to Johnsons Coffee, who provided the hot drinks, and Union Theological College.



To purchase your own copy of *The Place Called Reconciliation: Texts to explore* by David Stevens (£6.99 plus postage and packing) please contact Bernie Magill, Corrymeela on Tel. +44 (0)28 9050 8080 or email belfast@corrymeela.org.

All proceeds from the book will be going to Corrymeela.

To read more see Dr Cecelia Clegg's book review of *The Place Called Reconciliation: Texts to explore* on page 24.

Spring cleaning for Corrymeela with eBay for charity



FRUSTRATED with wardrobes full of clothes you hardly wear? Piles of old wedding gifts, children's toys and mistaken purchases clogging up your garage? Why not declutter your cupboards while contributing to Corrymeela at the same time? Spring cleaning for Corrymeela is an opportunity for you to raise funds for groups that need our support.

Corrymeela has registered with MissionFish, a non-profit organisation that runs eBay for Charity, who have raised £6,331,171 for 2,978 charities since 2006. Under this scheme, sellers on eBay can donate 10–100% of their profits to

any charity registered with MissionFish.

For example, if you want to sell an old bike on eBay then you can choose a percentage of the sale price to donate to Corrymeela (say, 100%!). If the bike sells you receive payment from the buyer and send the item off by post. MissionFish will collect the donation from you, claim GiftAid on Corrymeela's behalf, and pass the money onto us (with a very small deduction to cover costs). Of course you do not have to donate all profits to Corrymeela, but any percentage of donation means you earn a little, give a little, and everyone benefits.

With every listing made to benefit Corrymeela, our logo and mission statement, along with a special blue and yellow charity ribbon, are included on the listing. This attracts

extra customers as people are happy to see that part of their purchase goes to charity. It also raises awareness for Corrymeela and increases exposure of Corrymeela's name and mission. It is the perfect way to make a difference, and easy too.

For more information on the process of how to sell on eBay for Charity, visit <http://pages.ebay.co.uk/ebayforcharity/sell.html> to see how you can take part. Or for step by step instructions visit www.corrymeela.org/article/EBayforcharity.aspx

Good luck

TWO of the current LTV team, Krystal Cooper and Arzu Mizrak, have recently departed Corrymeela. Krystal returned home to the United States for both employment and personal reasons. Arzu has commenced a full-time degree course at the University of Ulster as of 26 January. She hopes to be able to continue to volunteer at the Centre on a short-term basis. We wish them both well and thank them for their contribution to the team and our work.

Croí Update

THANKS to the generosity of Friends and Members we have raised over £25,000 towards the refurbishment of the Croí on the Ballycastle site. The refurbishment has transformed the inside and outside of this special place. We now have an exhibition space, so make sure to have a look when next at the Centre in Ballycastle. We are very grateful to everyone who gave a donation to restore this unique building. If you would like your artwork to be considered for the exhibition please contact Ronnie Millar, Centre Director. Email ronniemillar@corrymeela.org or Tel: 028 2076 2626.



Going the distance

IN APRIL 2009 Harmander Singh will run his twenty-fifth consecutive London Marathon, this year in support of Corrymeela.

Harmander visited Corrymeela in July 2008 as the Sikh Co-ordinator with Faith Matters. He brought over a number of Sikhs and Muslims to explore the nature and depth of tensions between the two communities as well as mediate and reduce any such tensions. The findings from the Corrymeela programme are now being implemented through the inaugural meeting of NSMAG (National Sikh Muslim Action Group) which will address media

coverage of any relevant news concerning the Sikh and Muslim communities.

Harmander said of his experience, 'I was impressed by the Corrymeela set up and promised to do my little bit to help. Hopefully, people who learn of how a Sikh who came, saw, was touched by Corrymeela and its incredible track record and decided to run 26.2 miles for it, will give generously to Corrymeela to enable its good work to continue.'

As the coach of the two oldest marathon runners in the world, Fauja Singh, 97, holder of a dozen records, and Buster Martin, who ran last year's London Marathon at the



age of 101, Harmander is able to offer signed sporting mementos by the two famous athletes for auction. The proceeds will also go to Corrymeela.

Harmander Singh is married with four children and two grandchildren. Until 2007 he had worked for 25 years for local government and is now responsible for establishing the Faiths Forum for London.

To sponsor Harmander's London Marathon charity run or bid on memorabilia please email belfast@corrymeela.org or call 028 9050 8080 for more information.

Notable speaker receives prestigious award

Donald Shriver, Corrymeela Summer Festival keynote speaker, has been awarded the prestigious 2009 Louisville Grawemeyer Award in Religion.

Shriver, who is an ethicist and a former president of Union Seminary in NYC, has contributed many notable publications in religion and reconciliation over the course of his career.



Most recently his book *Honest Patriots: Loving a Country Enough to Remember Its Misdeeds* (Oxford University Press, 2005) garnered mention and recognition. It was described, 'Despite its somber topic, *Honest Patriots* is a book that fosters hope – hope that by facing our past sins we can move constructively and redemptively into a better future.'

An award well deserved, congratulations Donald!



UNA-UK Climate Change Conference Series 2008–09

The United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, UNA-UK, is hosting a series of free one-day conferences to discuss climate change from an international, national and local perspective. UNA-UK hopes to generate a critical mass of support and pressure in the UK for British leadership in the global fight against climate change.

Corrymeela is currently undertaking feasibility studies on ways to further use green energy on the Ballycastle site. Interested Corrymeela members and volunteers attended the second conference

in the series which took place in Belfast on the 6th November 2008. Specialist speaker sessions were complemented by networking breaks and a panel discussion on climate change in Northern Ireland. Topics such as 'Desperately Seeking Carbon: Strategies, Policies and Players', 'Time now for an International Declaration of Planetary Rights?' and 'Inspiring Individual Action' were delivered in detail by guest speakers Dr Bernard Bulkin, Commissioner for Energy and Transport at the UK Sustainable Development Commission, Polly Higgins, Environmental lawyer and UK Associate of EnAct International, and Trewin Restorick, CEO of Global

Action Plan and one of Al Gore's UK climate change ambassadors. Guests from Belfast City Council, WWF Northern Ireland, Friends of the Earth Northern Ireland, and Northern Ireland Environmental Link also participated.

The third conference will take place on Thursday 13 March 2009 in Swansea, Wales and a fourth conference is due to occur June 2009 in Edinburgh, Scotland.

To find out more visit <http://www.una-uk.org/climate>



New Year dedication

AT THE BEGINNING of each year there is an opportunity for Corrymeela members, staff and volunteers to meet for a service of dedication. As part of this dedication staff and volunteers stand together and make a simple dedication to their

work in the year ahead and commit themselves to being instruments of peace in the world. Often staff bring families along too to share in this thoughtful acknowledgement of the important contribution staff and volunteers make to the work of Corrymeela.

During the year Corrymeela members are invited to put forward names for provisional members who are able to commit to active membership and all that it entails with regular community meetings and more. After one

year, full membership is undertaken at the next dedication service. At this year's dedication service we welcomed the new provisional members for 2009, they are: Margaret Adams, Edward Lane, Alyson McElroy Jones, Ben Jones, Tara McHugh Logan, David Price, Lilian & Ronald Vellem, David Stewart and Ruth Walsh Stewart.

Fond farewells



WE ENJOYED our annual Corrymeela Christmas Open Day up here in Ballycastle on Sunday 14 December, with the Big Event being the arrival

of Santa. We'd like to thank all who came and participated in the day, with special thanks to Edward Lane for making the arrangements with Santa.

As well as being our annual Open Day, we also marked on Sunday night the planned departure of two young women who over the past year have been at the heart of the staff and volunteer team at Corrymeela Ballycastle. Since August 2007 Becca Moody has fulfilled the role of Volunteer Programme Assistant and since January 2008 Iulia Picu has been interning with both TIDES and Corrymeela. Each has made a considerable contribution to the life and work of the Centre and will be greatly missed. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank them for the leadership, patience and

commitment with which they have approached living and working here at Corrymeela Ballycastle.

Corrymeela is an organisation whose work in Ballycastle is heavily dependent upon volunteering. We are currently recruiting for a replacement for Becca and would be glad to hear from any interested applicants. More information on the Volunteer Programme Assistant role or other volunteering opportunities can be found on our website www.corrymeela.org or by contacting Robert Deignan or Sonja Tammen on 028 2076 2626.

Strategic plan for the future

JOIN Corrymeela in promoting our vision of peace into the future. Our new strategic plan has been developed to guide the work of Corrymeela from 2008 until 2013. It was created during a period of reflection on the changing nature of Northern Ireland and society in general, involving a wide range of members, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders who shared their thoughts

and ideas on the work of reconciliation in the current context, and their vision for Corrymeela. Please visit the website www.corrymeela.org to download your copy of our Strategic Plan 2008 – 2013 and see how you can get involved throughout the year and in the years to come.

We also have our new Events Guide for 2009 available to download from www.corrymeela.org



which gives information on all open events in Belfast, Ballycastle and Knocklayd.

Copies of both publications can also be obtained from Corrymeela House, Belfast, Tel 028 9050 8080

Coventry Move-in Day



DESPITE the gale-force winds that swept through Ballycastle on Sunday 24 November, a strong showing of people came out to support the Corrymeela Coffee Fundraiser marking the completion of the new volunteer accommodation, Coventry. Local Corrymeela members joined together to run this fundraiser with over

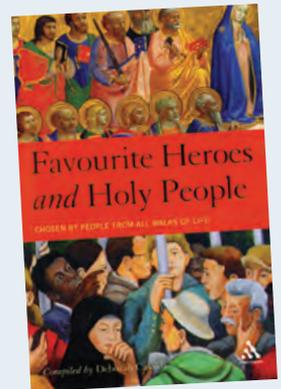
£200 raised in an afternoon to support volunteer costs at the Centre.

The official opening of Coventry will be held in April 2009 with President McAleese as special guest to commemorate this unique occasion. The building was made possible thanks to the International Fund for Ireland, EU Peace II funding, Ulster Garden Villages Ltd, and the Community Relations Council.

Favourite Heroes and Holy People

Ronald Blythe contends, 'Deborah Cassidi has succeeded in persuading an extraordinary range of people – men, women and, quite wonderfully, children – to allow her to publish the few words which they have found to make sense of life to them: witty words, profound words, sometimes quite ordinary words, most often perfectly expressed words.' In her recent anthology, *Favourite Heroes and Holy People*, Lady Cassidi has gathered a diverse and moving set of contributions, consisting largely of quotations from the hero or holy person, a personal comment on what that person means to the contributor and some biographical notes. Corrymeela founder Revd Ray Davey is included as one of the many heroes and holy people honoured. A true treasure and source of humour, inspiration and encouragement – this book is worth sharing.

Favourite Heroes and Holy People, published by Continuum Books, is available for purchase from www.continuumbooks.com. The proceeds go to the Threshold Prize, a charity which encourages children to write creatively.



Peace comes to Corrymeela



CORRYMEELA is pleased to announce that Peace III funding is now in place to support two projects based at Corrymeela House, Belfast. The first is a continuation of the very successful Community Partners programme; this project has been further developed to extend and embed reconciliation within and between communicates by creating a consortium of three legacy peace centres, the Glenree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, Donegal Peace Centre at An Teach Bán and the Corrymeela Community along with lead partner Co-operation Ireland. The consortium will cultivate and sustain positive relationships at a local level across the region and across transitional sectarian and new social divides. A network of

people and groups will grow out of the consortium, which will contribute to a change in attitudes and behaviours relating to sectarianism and racism.

The aim of the second project is to work in close partnership with NICRAS (Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers) to develop a package of formal and informal training and to support integration between the host community and the growing refugee community in Northern Ireland. This project will help to develop mutual understanding between the host community and growing refugee community and promote ways of dealing with difference that may reduce the likelihood of sectarian behaviour and violence and increase the potential for members of

the refugee community to fully integrate into their new environment.

At its core the project's aim is to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and promote reconciliation in fostering relationships between people within a

shared neighbourhood. Recruitment is underway for a project worker to lead this innovative programme and in the next issue of Corrymeela there will be more information introducing this valuable work.



Welcome New Faith and Life Worker

PLEASE WELCOME Emma Cowan, our new Faith and Life worker, to the Corrymeela Community.

Emma was born into a Mid-Ulster farming community where issues of reconciliation were at the heart of family life. After studying sociology at Durham, she moved to Manchester where she was involved in initiating a student prayer and campaign network, SPEAK (www.speak.org.uk), focusing on development education and lobbying government on the arms trade and trade justice. An interest in conflict transformation and trade took her to Israel/Palestine, importing fair trade olive oil from Jenin and volunteering on a farm peace project with a Christian Palestinian family outside Beit Jala. She returned to Northern Ireland in 2006 to study a Masters in Reconciliation at the Irish School of Ecumenics. Alongside the role with Corrymeela, she is setting up a time bank scheme called Justxchange (www.justxchange.org). Emma's range of other interests includes Urban Community Gardens, dancing and brooch-making.



Legacies

We remember William Glass of Ballycastle and John Hugh Finlay. We sincerely hope that it brings a little comfort to their families to know that their legacy gifts will be put to good use.

London Support Group

IN 2005 CORRYMEELA CELEBRATED its 40th anniversary and held events in London at St Martin in the Fields in Trafalgar Square and at St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace in the City. The Corrymeela London Support Group helped to run these events under its previous leader, Katy Peters, and I took over as leader 18 months later, when Katy moved out of London.

Greater London is large, 30 miles across with a population of 14 million. As a group, we find that distance and congestion make it difficult for us to hold our own meetings, but happily, St Martin's and St Ethelburga's programmes include many events which interest us, and we have been glad to continue our association by supporting these.

St Ethelburga's is a medieval church which survived the Great Fire of London and the blitzes of two World Wars, but was almost completely destroyed in 1993 by an IRA lorry bomb which was targeting commercial buildings opposite. Both the previous and present Bishops of London had the vision that the church should be restored, as a Centre for Reconciliation and Peace. It reopened in 2002 and has fulfilled this mission since, with a very diverse programme of cultural, artistic, musical, social and religious events, which aim to foster understanding across many political, religious and social divides.

St Ethelburga's is very well placed to bring people with experience of different conflicts together in the same meeting, and it did this in February 2008 with Truth Discovery in Divided Societies, which explored the situation of Muslims in Britain, how discrimination can develop, the Solomon Islands and South Africa, and talks on Northern Ireland by David Stevens and Alf McCreary.

Its November meeting on Narratives of Hope was equally diverse. It explored how story-telling can bring understanding and peace, with speakers from the Middle East, Nigeria, South Africa, Warrington, Glasgow and Northern Ireland.

On St Ethelburga's Day it celebrated the 15th anniversary of its near destruction and the new role it achieved as a result. Canon Flora Winfield, who experienced the Omagh bombing at close hand gave



the address, and now serves as a part-time chaplain to the Centre.

It is very striking how often speakers at St Ethelburga's, speaking on different areas of conflict, take heart from the progress made in Northern Ireland, see it as an example to follow, and express how grateful they are for the help they have had from contacts they have made there.

We can all share St Ethelburga's prayer for an end to violence:

**God of life,
Every act of violence in our world,
between myself and another, destroys a
part of your creation.**

**Stir within my heart a renewed sense of
reverence for all life. Give me the vision
to recognise your spirit in every human
being, however they behave towards me.**

**Make possible the impossible by
cultivating in me the fertile seed of
healing love.**

**May I play my part in breaking the cycle
of violence by realising that peace begins
with me.**

Amen.

Mick Oliver

Mick Oliver is a recently retired building scientist who lives in Stanmore, Middlesex, and worships at St John's Church there. He and his wife Sheila had no Irish connections, but became aware of Irish history (recent and current) during their honeymoon in Killarney 40 years ago. This led them to discover Corrymeela and resulted in Mick's leading the London Support Group. New members are very welcome.



Lady of the Dance

IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME since I was 13. Twelve years to be exact. Yet here I was fulfilling a life-long dream amongst that very age group. I was at my first Irish dancing class and the fact that my classmates were a foot shorter and at least a decade younger didn't matter. In fact, as the night wore on I found that far from detracting from my enjoyment, the age of my new friends brought insight and joy – not just to the dancing but to my life as a Corrymeela volunteer as well.

I have been 'working' with children and youth since I was a teenager myself. I would describe myself as someone who enjoys people and thrives on the energy of youth work. However, I also get tired. There are moments, sometimes hours and days, when I feel burdened by the responsibility of working with young people. Compulsorily burdened. Responsibility had become such a pattern that I forgot something could exist outside of a hierarchical, safety-focused relationship between adult and child.

Memory came flooding back. I was a tall girl among equals, or if anything, among superiors. Some of them had been dancing since they were toddlers. Upon the teacher's prompting different girls would teach me different dance steps. My teachers were mostly 13, one of them was only 9. They were such people, they were such fun! Stripped of inherent reserve towards 'adults' because many of them thought I was 16, we talked about my American accent, the upcoming school play, the proper way to point your toe. They encouraged me, corrected me, and clapped for me when I wobbled my display of newfound knowledge to the dance teacher.

I know I can't be thirteen again even if I wanted to and the connection I made doesn't erase the real differences between me and my new friends. Yet this became very clear: the heaviness I sometimes feel when working with younger people isn't compulsory. There is an aspect of reasonability and authority that comes with the territory of age. However, there are plenty of opportunities and spaces where it isn't necessary to carry that weight. Plenty of places where I can choose to follow, choose to learn from the experiences of others, even and especially if they are younger. Finally, there is joy in newfound friendships and the rediscovery of personhood in the other.



Tiffany Rendall

Tiffany currently makes up one-half of Corrymeela's onsite Resource Couple with her husband, Tim.



CRUNCH-BACK



activism from the kitchen table

SINCE NOVEMBER, I have had the privilege of starting a new Belfast-based post as Corrymeela Faith and Life worker. In this part-time role I will, along with a team of Corrymeela members and interested others, develop a range of events seeking to engage folks in social and ethical issues, with a definite emphasis on education, reflection and action.

We are calling the initiative AKT, which stands for Activism from the Kitchen Table. We want the events to promote a sense that together we can develop our collective awareness of the issues facing the marginalised in our society and pinpoint ways that we can enhance our practical activism.

The first of our events, the Crunch-Back, was held on 26 February, beginning with a most topical issue facing all in our community, the issue of the economic crisis. Chris Erskine, who has worked for the Shaftsbury Society and the New Economics Foundation gave an overview and analysis of the

current situation. We then moved towards smaller group discussion focusing on practical lifestyle changes that can aid us in creatively riding the economic storm. The evening was open to all members and friends and we appreciated the strong turnout and support.

It will be an exciting year of events, some of which will include topics tackling the economy, the environment, refugee and asylum seeker issues, sexuality and mental health and illness. I am also excited to join Corrymeela at this juncture of Community life, where there is a deep intention to develop Ray Davey's original vision for social, political and theological reconciliation. We are living in times where our lives speak volumes to those who are seeking to see what it means to follow Christ post-Christendom.

Emma Cowan

To find out more about AKT, including ways to get involved, email emmacowan@corrymeela.org or call No. 8 and leave a message.





Christmas Kings of Ballycastle

ON THE 6TH DECEMBER Ballycastle townspeople came together in true Christmas spirit for a most memorable tree-lighting ceremony. Even outshining the glitter of lights and red tinsel that adorned the towering tree, was the intention and effort put into the project's preparation. Ballycastle's Spreading Wings Partnership, sponsored by the National Lottery through the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Corrymeela's Family and Community worker, Rachel Craig, and Moyle District Council Good Relations Officer, Joy Wisener, spearheaded this intergenerational, ecumenical, and community focused festivity.

Spreading Wings co-ordinator, David Quinney Mee, noted, 'Rachel, with Louise McLean (willow artist) did a superb job of working with the churches. This is the first time the three main Ballycastle churches have worked together on this kind of community arts project.' The project garnering such symbolic and significant mention was the making of three life-size Kings, one by each church in the town; the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church and the Catholic Church. Over weeks of effort, each team produced a beautiful King made from willow and covered with fine paper to create a lantern. Each King held a basket for gifts and was adorned by a glittering patchwork cloak.

Children from Ballycastle High School and Cross Passion College helped make the cloaks as a visual storytelling of the season's significance for their families, from their grandparents' experience to their own (many of which involved a tractor!). The children drew pictures, wrote poems and rhymes, depicting Christmas in all kinds of ways. The cloaks were further decorated, bedazzled and stitched by the Ballycastle Over 55s Club, children of Causeway Women's Aid group, the local Creative Writers group and young people from the sea-front Drop-in Centre.

Rachel reflects, 'This was a chance to build a community of shared story. It was such fun, making friends and having a laugh, but in the participation, still something very special to hear so much from all ages. It was fantastic to work with everyone, the teachers, classes and all the different agencies over the weeks with all their enthusiasm, and see it all come together.'

The tree-lighting was an energetic event, children raising high their willow lanterns (over a hundred made in the primary schools with Streetwise Community Circus), carols being sung, Cookstown Silver Band playing, and Father Christmas bringing energy and awe to the little ones. And the three Kings looked on, glowing and playing their part as the community came a bit closer together.

Each church exchanged the King they made with another, taking each other's gift back to their own congregation. They shook hands and shared the 'peace'. With frosty fingers and warm hearts, they shared a symbol of hope and exchanged much needed joy and merriment. David agrees, 'This project was not just fun, it was valuable. Churches and community benefit as we soften our edges and play a bit together. The Kings were a step towards that.'

Ada Ketchie



Leaving a Legacy

A tribute to Kathleen Davey



In the past few weeks two giant oaks have fallen in the forest of ecumenism, and Corrymeela will not be quite the same without them.

In one sense both Kathleen Davey and John Morrow had made their major contributions long ago, but they have left a legacy which will challenge and also inspire those following in their footsteps.

Each made a very different contribution, but that is the nature of any community where the individual's gifts are subsumed for the greater good of all. The tributes paid to Kathleen and to John at their Thanksgiving Services, which were extraordinary by normal Presbyterian standards, bore testimony to the

width and depth of those contributions.

Both of them pre-dated the formation of Corrymeela, and each made a contribution to the establishment of the Community. It is sometimes forgotten how radical this was, in the days before the Troubles began. These pioneers saw the need for the Community long before the mainstream churches or even the liberal politicians were aware of such a challenge.

Kathleen Davey was a lifelong supporter of Ray, the Founder, and he tirelessly paid tribute to her loyalty and inspiration. They were literally inseparable, and our hearts go out to Ray and his family in their bereavement, and also to John's family. He was also enormously supported by his wife, Shirley, whose early death grieved him so deeply.

Although Kathleen Davey chose to remain largely in the background, she made a significant contribution to Corrymeela in her own right. She knew instinctively where she might make a difference, and she had the gift for making friends, even with those who found it difficult to open up to others.

A gracious lady, a friend to all. Her sharp mind and generous heart enveloped us without reserve. We are most grateful for the gift of being her friend for a short, meaningful period in our lives. Our thoughts and prayers are with Ray and the family.

Don & Jeannette Sloan

Kathleen made the Corrymeela garden a labour of love, but even more important, she



Legacy

Ray and John Morrow

sowed the seeds of friendship with those who came to admire her handiwork, and also to join in. She also instilled confidence in people and helped them to find their own worth for themselves. Her deep spirituality and sensitivity was evident in her writing. She was a stickler at proofreading, but she also had the vision and intuition of a poet.

John was also a warm and engaging human being, who had an attractive element of cragginess and intellectual independence. He could argue his case with anyone in any forum, and often did so, but he was invariably helpful and understanding.

He also had enormous courage, at a time when this rare-enough quality was at a premium, and in a province where so many church leaders and members simply kept their heads down and took the easy option. When I was researching my second book on Corrymeela, *In War and Peace*, John told me that he did not mind 'a bit of disagreement'.

John's contribution to the growth and development of Corrymeela and the wider community is considerable. It is a legacy that we will honour as we go on without him.

Kate Pettis

He added 'We cannot always pretend to agree on everything, and we have to work things out.' In stating this so clearly, John did an immense service to Corrymeela and to others, in a cynical world where so many believe that ecumenists are merely tree-



huggers, which they certainly are not.

Ray has said to me often 'Life is not static, it is dynamic, and we have to move on.' Moving on is indeed in the nature of things, but it is also part of our heritage to look back with deep gratitude on those like Kathleen Davey and John Morrow, and many others, who made so much of the journey possible for the rest of us.

Alf McCreary

Alf McCreary is Religion Correspondent of the Belfast Telegraph and the author of a wide range of books including two on Corrymeela, published by Christian Books and by the Brehon Press.





The Last Roundabout

Life's journey is not a straight road.
 Blind corners, steep climbs,
 Brief downhill,
 Crossroads, barriers, dead-ends,
 A sudden crash, a narrow shave,
 Wrong turning,
 Road up – slow down,
 Till finally comes
 That last roundabout
 Where the co-driver takes over.
 And you no longer choose the way,
 No longer drive, but are driven.
 One turning more to take,
 Be it Cancer Crescent, Stroke Street,
 Heart Drive, Alzheimers Avenue
 Or maybe Sleep Gardens,
 Whichever way
 It leads to Home.

Kathleen Davey

Kathleen was one of the most remarkable people I have ever met. I'm sure many people will comment on her astounding memory, which enabled her to keep tabs on the vast numbers of people who connected with her via Corrymeela and elsewhere. I was a volunteer at the Centre years ago and I rarely get back to Northern Ireland, but she always remembered me and the details of my life. She had a spirit which was so affirming to other people, I always felt buoyed by time spent with her. I count her as one of my heroes.

Beth Rempe

John Morrow was a Leader of the Corrymeela Community driven by a central vision of reconciliation and deeply held values centred on social justice. John was a most wonderful colleague for 6 years who never undermined your best efforts and intentions and a friend since we met in the 1960's. John insisted that proposed programmes and initiatives had to have a rigour and integrity about them; he ensured that all we did was thought through and coherent. However he was always open to the unexpected and, as in life itself, he expected that things sometimes did not work and that that was to be embraced. John was a voice for the excluded and forgotten-he was a fierce advocate for those who needed to be acknowledged. Many people have been diminished and victimised by the threats and violence that were part of the conflict here. Some have been able to stand up to this intimidation and pressure and make new choices, to become subjects shaping their own lives rather than remain the objects of other people's diminishing behaviour. Many people owe their second chance to grow and stand tall to the availability, wisdom and counsel of John Morrow.

Derick Wilson



Past and present Corrymeela leaders



What is true peace?



TRUE PEACE is always possible. Yet it requires strength and practice, particularly in times of great difficulty. To some, peace and nonviolence are synonymous with passivity and weakness. In truth, practising peace and nonviolence is far from passive. To practise peace, to make peace alive in us, is to actively cultivate understanding, love and compassion, even in the face of misperception and conflict. Practising peace, especially in times of war, requires courage. All of us can practise nonviolence. We begin by recognising that, in the depths of our consciousness, we have both the seeds of compassion and the seeds of violence. We become aware that our mind is like a garden that contains all kinds of seeds; seeds of understanding, seeds of forgiveness, seeds of mindfulness, and also seeds of ignorance, fear and hatred. We realise that at any given moment we can behave with either violence or compassion, depending on the strength of these seeds within us. When the seeds of anger, violence and fear are watered in us several times a day, they will grow stronger. Then we are unable to be happy, unable to accept ourselves; we suffer and we make those around us suffer. Yet when we know how to cultivate the seeds of love, compassion and understanding those seeds will become stronger and the seeds of violence and hatred will become weaker and weaker. We know that if we water the seeds of anger, violence and fear in us, we will lose our peace and our stability. We will suffer and we will make those around us suffer. But if we cultivate the seeds of compassion, we nourish peace within us and around us. With this understanding, we are already on the path of creating peace.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Excerpt courtesy of Resurgence Magazine

www.resurgence.org

Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Zen Buddhist monk nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Martin Luther King, Jr., has been exiled from his country for thirty-five years. However, during these years he has founded a religious community in France, Plum Village, traveled and lectured widely, written prolifically, and led hundreds of workshops and retreats, appealing to people from various religious, spiritual, and political backgrounds.

Come, hear and be changed

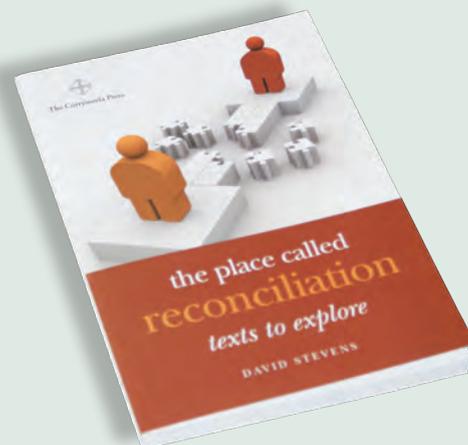
David Stevens: *The Place Called Reconciliation: Texts to explore*

Reviewed by Cecelia Clegg

THIS BOOK IS VERY APTLY SUBTITLED 'texts to explore'. Following on from his 2004 book *The Land of Unlikeness*, David Stevens has developed an impressive array of reflections on biblical texts and other stories which address issues of violence, conflict, peace and reconciliation. While these reflections arise out of the immediate context of the Corrymeela Community and the wider horizon of Northern Ireland, they are in no way limited by them. Stevens brings in material from South Africa, Rwanda, and former Yugoslavia to deepen and open out his insights. The result is an outstanding resource book for individuals and groups, from many national contexts, who wish to meditate on these themes, or to enter into what Stevens calls 'conversation' around them.

One of the strengths of the book is the 20-page introduction. Here Stevens sets out, in an accessible way, a Girardian understanding of human relationships. He also describes the book's central thesis that the Christian Church is called to challenge and transform systems which depend on sacrificial violence, scapegoating and victimisation and to live, through Christ, in a mimesis of love not rivalry. But this is not a prelude to slushy idealism or religious piety. David Stevens, through a combination of struggling with difficult biblical texts (e.g. the 'Texts of Terror', p.48) and clear-headed political and social realism, borne of his experiences in Northern Ireland, challenges the reader to let themselves be transformed: 'Scripture is not really a text but an activity: Come, hear and be changed' (p.26). God's call to the Church to challenge injustice and exclusion and to practise hospitality towards strangers, outcasts and even enemies echoes and re-echoes through the reflections.

The biblical passages cover an extraordinary range from Genesis to Revelation, majoring in the gospels and Pauline texts. But if the range is breathtaking, the arrangement seems to be



somewhat unusual. For example, there is no attempt to deal systematically with the key dynamics of reconciliation: forgiveness, repentance, justice and truth-telling, though all of these are present in the reflections. There are some texts grouped by themes: Warring Brothers, the Importance of Meals, Stories about Scapegoats and Healing. Between these mini-collections sit assorted texts which form a rather haphazard tapestry of interlocking insights. The overall rationale seems to be to highlight the dangers of mimesis and scapegoating and to show ways to overcome them as a path towards reconciliation.

Perhaps the most startling and yet the most compelling aspect of this book for me is the way that David Stevens has woven together spiritual biblical reflection with solid, politically astute commentary on society and history. The sections entitled 'Nationalism and Religion' (p.59) and 'The Janus Face of Religion' (p.140) illustrate this well.

Given David Stevens' lucid and engaging style, this is an easy read. But it is not a comfortable one for any Christian who feels and thinks deeply about their society and the things that make for peace and reconciliation.

Cecelia Clegg

Cecelia Clegg is a Scot who lived in Ireland from 1989-2005 including 10 years in North Belfast. She is a theologian, psychological counsellor and group facilitator, who has taught psychology, theology, and conflict transformation in both Dublin and Belfast. Currently, director of the Centre for Theology and Public Issues, University of Edinburgh, she lectures in Practical Theology and manages the Master of Theology in Ministry programme.

People understanding borders

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, Corrymeela has a PUB group? No! Not quite! PUB stands for People Understanding Borders. The issues we deal with are cross-border not only in that they are relevant to young people in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, but also we work through the borders which young people have to deal with in their everyday lives.

The idea was the result of the Future Individual Directions programme which took place at Corrymeela during the summer, and this was my first time at Corrymeela. The idea was for a programme which initially we would learn from and then acquire the skills to pass the same knowledge on to other young people at Corrymeela and in our own communities.

The programme consists of five weekend sessions, during which we focus on different issues and receive accredited training. The aim is to work towards a conference at Easter when we will deliver the idea to other young people who will begin the programme next year, which some of us will help facilitate. The participants are an amazingly diverse group of young people from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland including students, workers and professionals from both rural communities and cities. Our similarities and differences make the programme so interesting as we each gain insight from young people who live very different lives, but experience very similar problems in their own communities.

With the help of Ivan Cross and Colleen Brown we have designed the programme in such a way that it is not only challenging and insightful, but also creative, relaxed and fun. The programme is co-ordinated by Ivan, who ensured that we have ownership of the programme and that we, as

the participants, decide at every step what it is we want to do. Colleen has encouraged creative thought when exploring the issues, which helps us understand them at more complex levels.

The issues we deal with include family, health and well-being and conflict and these are approached creatively. The exercises and activities include small group work, large group discussions, collages and presentations, and theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of need, as well as tools such as genograms and circles of influence.

As a student, perhaps one of the only challenges is making the time commitment to come to Corrymeela in the middle of coursework or exam stress. Indeed we all come from busy lives, but when we walk through the door at Corrymeela and see familiar faces we forget about everything else, have a cup of tea and start to work on the programme. We work really well together and we always do team-building exercises and outdoor activities. Indeed, one of my fondest memories so far is of raft-building, when we were divided into two teams and had to build and then race the rafts . . . let's just say that some people were very competitive when their raft sunk, but they refused to go down without a fight!

The PUB group is an amazing group, which I feel very privileged to be involved with and I look forward to our next weekend of fun.

Rachel Bergin



Rachel is currently a second-year Law student at Queen's University. Her many interests include volunteering and sailing with the Ocean Youth Trust, performing in Belfast musical theatre productions, learning Spanish and being a friend to many.



Special thanks to British Council for part funding this project under The Causeway Exchange Programme which has been developed as a means of helping to strengthen and improve relationships between young people on the islands of Britain and Ireland.

Keeping sexual health under wraps

DURING the People Understanding Borders (PUB) residential in November the participants engaged in a discussion on their general experiences of receiving sexual health information. It was commonly experienced that the education system and youth and community organisations had failed, in many ways, to deal effectively with issues on sexuality and sexual health in a manner that made sense to young people.

Providing comprehensive sexual health services and enabling young people to make healthy and conscious choices means not only accessing health services and the relevant information, but also providing a space where attitudes and values around sex, gender and sexuality can be discussed openly. Many issues relating to sexual health, however, remain taboo. Combining this with the fact that young people are bombarded with often misleading information from the media results in many being left misinformed and insecure. This increases the risk of their finding themselves in situations that are harmful for themselves or others.

We need only look to some of the facts immediately around us to realise that this affects our whole community. Amongst the young people that identify as LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans-gendered) in Northern Ireland, 63 per cent experienced negative attitudes around sexual orientation within their school. Only 11 per cent felt that the school offered them support regarding this. This lack of support has resulted in 50 per cent of

these young people having self-harmed and they are also five times more likely to be medicated for depression.

A recent Amnesty survey revealed some frightening attitudes regarding the recent sexual assaults on young women in the Belfast area. Of the students surveyed, it was found that about half of them believed that a girl attacked was partially, or totally, to blame depending on what she was wearing, her behaviour or her alcohol consumption that night.

In addition, the teenage pregnancy rates in Northern Ireland still remain one of the highest in Europe and the number of young people infected with STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections) is steadily rising.

Taking all these facts into account there is a clear need for increased and renewed support. The education system and community organisations need to step up and engage in dialogue, challenging homophobic and sexist



Recognition Payments and the Consultative Group on the Past

attitudes and behaviour.

There is a persistent fear that if one speaks openly about these issues it opens up a can of worms. Many fear the potential encouragement of premature and promiscuous sexual behaviour. Contrary to these beliefs, comparative sexual health studies worldwide show that accessibility to comprehensive sexual health education actually postpones young people's sexual debut and they subsequently make safer, conscious choices once sexually active.

In the end the costs are too high for us to leave harmful attitudes unchallenged and wrongfully thinking we are taking the easy way out by choosing not to confront them. It is whether we dare to take on the responsibility to provide for a dialogue. We need to keep scrutinising and challenging the reasons why these issues remain under wraps and arrive at the simple conclusion that looking after our sexual health, with all its agonies, emotions and desires, is a crucial aspect of a healthy individual and a healthy community.

Emilie Weiderud



Emilie is from Sweden and has been living in Northern Ireland since 2004 when she arrived as a long-term volunteer at Corrymeela. Having finished a degree in Social Anthropology and work as a sexual health peer educator, she now works as a mental health project worker.

The PUB Programme (People Understanding Borders) is a programme for young adults between 18 and 25, covering various topics on each residential chosen by it participants. The residential on the 13–15 March will be solely on the topic of sexuality and sexual health. If you or anyone you know would like to be involved in the PUB programme, please contact Corrymeela Youth Worker Ivan Cross. Email: ivancross@corrymeela.org



PUBLIC REACTION to the Report of the Consultative Group on the Past has concentrated on the recommendation that the nearest relative of someone who has been killed as a result of the Troubles should receive £12,000, no matter whether the dead were terrorists, members of the security forces or civilians. This issue has overshadowed the other recommendations of the Report, which are worthy of serious attention.

Why has there been such reaction to this proposal? The Report itself did not see the payment as compensation but as a 'recognition payment'.

One key reality is that there has been no conclusive victory in the Northern Ireland conflict. Normally what happens in a conflict where there has been a winner is that the winners' 'victims' (no matter what they have done), become publicly acclaimed heroes (and their families receive recognition payments) and the losers' 'victims' (or their families) retreat into the silent shadows where there is no recognition.

The public story is told by the victors – 'terrorists' become 'freedom fighters'. Defeated 'insurgents' become 'terrorists', and so on.

What we have in Northern Ireland are two sets of 'victims' (or their representatives) still contesting the nature of the conflict and the power to definitively tell the story. And this is going to go on. The Eames/Bradley proposal of giving the dead of the Troubles equal recognition was always going to be controversial – because the on-going conflict around victims is about recognition (it is even about who can be properly regarded as a 'victim'). To allow your enemy's 'victims' to be as equally recognised as yours is an act of incredible generosity, which we are simply not capable of now. Thus the proposal is a step too far. Or is it at best premature. Perhaps when we have gone through some process of dealing with the past – such as the Consultative Group recommends – we might be capable of such a gesture, but not now. And it is certainly not guaranteed in the future.

A further problem with the proposal is that it offended many people's sense of moral narrative: how can the dead terrorists' families get the same payment as the families of innocent victims? This made no moral sense. It could only make sense in a context of a recognition of shared suffering (these people suffered too even if I don't agree with their cause); that violence didn't spring from nowhere; and that our community didn't always act rightly. We would have to extend our moral imaginations. We are far from there.

David Stevens

2008 saw the first delegation of the Causeway Project gather in Northern Ireland. Co-director Dimi Reider shares of their experience.

Causeway aims to bring more Palestinian and Israeli groups to Northern Ireland this year, with the long-term aim of establishing a network of experience exchange and comparative learning between the two conflict areas.

Causeways across conflict

IN SEPTEMBER, a group of young, if somewhat shabby, individuals gathered in the cosy lounge room of the Village at the Ballycastle Centre. The fireplace was cracking, the thunder outside was cracking twice as loud, and, this being fall in County Antrim, the green slope outside the window was being hacked and slashed by unrelenting rain. We came from quite a few corners of the globe – mostly from Israel-Palestine, but also from the Republic, Belgium, Portugal and the North – and we were trying to figure out where to go next, which, admittedly, is the appropriate state of mind for any social change activist, rain or shine. But unlike many previous occasions and settings in which we embarked upon similar deliberations, this time we also had some hopes to build upon.

The group was at the tail end of a ten-day expedition to Northern Ireland, aiming to look at the considerable progress made there in comparison to the overall degeneration happening where we came from. With cartloads of serendipity and many helping hands, this once in a lifetime visit overflowed with knowledge and experience and not a moment was wasted. Our brief ten days

in the region were spent enjoying the warmth of both Corrymeela and Kilcranny House, the latter through the magical hospitality of Conn Mulvenna. We also managed to partake of the skills and wisdom of Michael Doherty of the Derry Peace and Reconciliation group; Don Brown and Stephen Harkin of Gaslight; Colin Craig of Tides Training; Ronny Millar and Susan McEwen of Corrymeela; Reverend Harold Good; Maeve McLaughlin, the leader of Sinn Féin at Derry City Council; playwright Damian Gorman and Jim Keys of the Bloody Sunday Justice Committee and of the Epilogues project; Zandy Craig of the 7th Generation project. We also had an eye-and-heart-opening Derry City tour and fireside chat with Jon McCourt, and, on one of the last days, managed to run into Gerry Adams in the pub. I kid you not.

I'm told that there used to be a joke in Northern Ireland during the Troubles; 'Welcome to Belfast International Airport, please move your watches back by four hundred years.' For us, coming from a conflict zone edging towards another and much deadlier eruption, and from an activist sector wading on in despondency and the closest activists





can come to resignation, this experience was diametrically the opposite. Whether it's in the behaviour of the politicians, the commitment of grassroots organisation to community, and the communication and co-operation running across the third sector – Northern Ireland seems light years ahead. Every one of us came back to Israel twice emboldened: both because we caught a glimpse of the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel, and because the light was flickering off a computer monitor late at night, with plans to be written, programmes to be made and ideas to be carried out. In other words, we saw that there was nothing magical about the conflict transformation that took place in Northern Ireland. It was the result of hard work, solidarity, careful planning and a lot of luck – with still more hard work, careful planning, solidarity and a lot of luck. In other words, this was humanly possible, both for the Northerners and, by deduction, for ourselves.

They say that leaving Corrymeela is the hardest part of the experience. Reality tends to slap you on the face once you are out. In Israel, reality also indulges in pushing you on the pavement and kicking your guts, all the while waving flags and cheering as sophisticated bombers sail on South. I'm sure that some of those who are reading this article might also have experienced a kind of bleak *déjà vu* if they were given to wander Israeli streets during the attacks. The absolute and sincere conviction of the perpetrators' victimhood, as well as the resulting entitlement to visit any kind of savagery on the perceived offender side. The eery feeling of hearing hitherto good, compassionate and intelligent people casually justify the utter butchery carried out by Israeli soldiers in the Gaza strip. The nausea experienced upon discovering that newspapers were no longer merely manipulating facts, but elatedly lying to your face. And worst of all, seeing the operation wrap up neatly and those responsible dusting themselves off and washing their hands as they prepare to enter the era of a new American administration – all this is enough to make one's fists clench and head bow down more.

But ironically, the comfort that we take through the North Irish prism is that this horrid flash of

violence is just a part of the bigger picture, which is considerably worse. Ethnic cleansing is weaving its path into the Israeli mainstream discourse. Radical right-wing Jewish enclaves spring up in Arab neighbourhoods, and their residents are appealing to the courts to protect their right to march. Elected officials speak of segregation as a safety measure. Mutual economic boycotts crop up silently. Does any of that sound familiar at all?



Jon McCourt leads Derry City tour

And yet, the very bleakness of this picture is our source of comfort. Beggar's comfort, but comfort nonetheless. There is nothing we can do about the jets and missiles killing a mere hour's drive away from where we live a fairly normal, Western life. But we can reach out to our communities and build coalitions against the segregationist assault. We can engage with the enclaves, decry the danger of the language of exclusion and demographic threat, build bridges and make sure the outside world knows what is happening. In short, this is not merely a catastrophe; it's a situation, a given slice of time that has a beginning and an end. And it is our responsibility to slowly, patiently, with the help of many friends, bring this end about and emerge to the tasks and challenges on the other side. And among those friends, the ones in Northern Ireland come first and foremost, because they'd been there, on that other end. All we need to do is get there. See you in 400 years time?

Dimi Reider



Dimi Reider is an Israeli activist and journalist. His writing and photographs have appeared in the *Jerusalem Post*, *Index on Censorship* and *Haaretz*. Dimi first came to Corrymeela as a volunteer in 2006, and had been returning every year since - the last time as co-director of the Causeway Project.

A brother in Christ

by **Ray Davey**

Ray is founder of the Corrymeela Community.

A VERY IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIP FOR ME has been with Bishop Tony Farquhar, whom I first met when he was one of the Catholic chaplains at Queen's University. I have learnt much from him: what his faith means to him, his dedication and spirituality, his deep love and concern for young people, his zest for life, be it folk music or football, his lovely sense of humour and the sincerity of his friendship. I have seen the price he pays for his vocation and the strength of his discipline. Nor can I forget the way in which he accepted me as a friend and a brother in Christ.

This acceptance did not mean that he expected me to give up my convictions. Nor did I think he should surrender his.

We accepted each other with our differences. I have still many problems with his tradition and he with mine. Even so, we can accept each other as followers of the one Lord and face our differences in the spirit of trust and openness. Hence the importance of

real meeting; this means risk-taking, finding common ground and being willing to share our lives, our interests, our concerns and our faith. In this way we learn to grow together.

The good Lord gives each of us from time to time those little hints, signs that He is about, if we have the eyes to see them. This is such a one that was given to my wife Kathleen and myself, along with Tony Farquhar, who was at that time one of the Catholic chaplains at Queen's University. The three of us had travelled to Lausanne in Switzerland to tell about the work of

Corrymeela. It was the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and we had a very full programme of meetings, services and interviews.

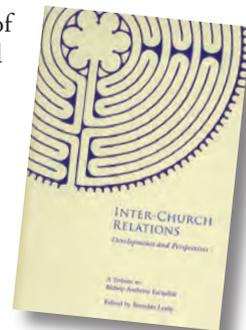
One afternoon we had a pause in our itinerary and our gracious hosts decided that we needed a break, so they drove us away up into the snow-capped mountains and through a quiet peaceful landscape, until we came to a little village called Romain Moitier. When we got out of the car they led us to a beautiful Romanesque church which they thought would interest us. No sooner had we entered the foyer than we began to understand why they had brought us to this place. On the wall immediately facing us as we entered there was a large map of ancient Europe. Ireland on the edge of it was marked out with a red circle.

Across Holland, Belgium, France, Germany and Switzerland certain places were underlined. As we studied it we could see that it was the story of the Irish missionaries of the Celtic period in the fifth to ninth centuries who had journeyed from their different houses in Ireland. We can think of Columbanus who came from the monastery in Bangor, Co. Down, and had established Christian Communities in many parts of Europe.

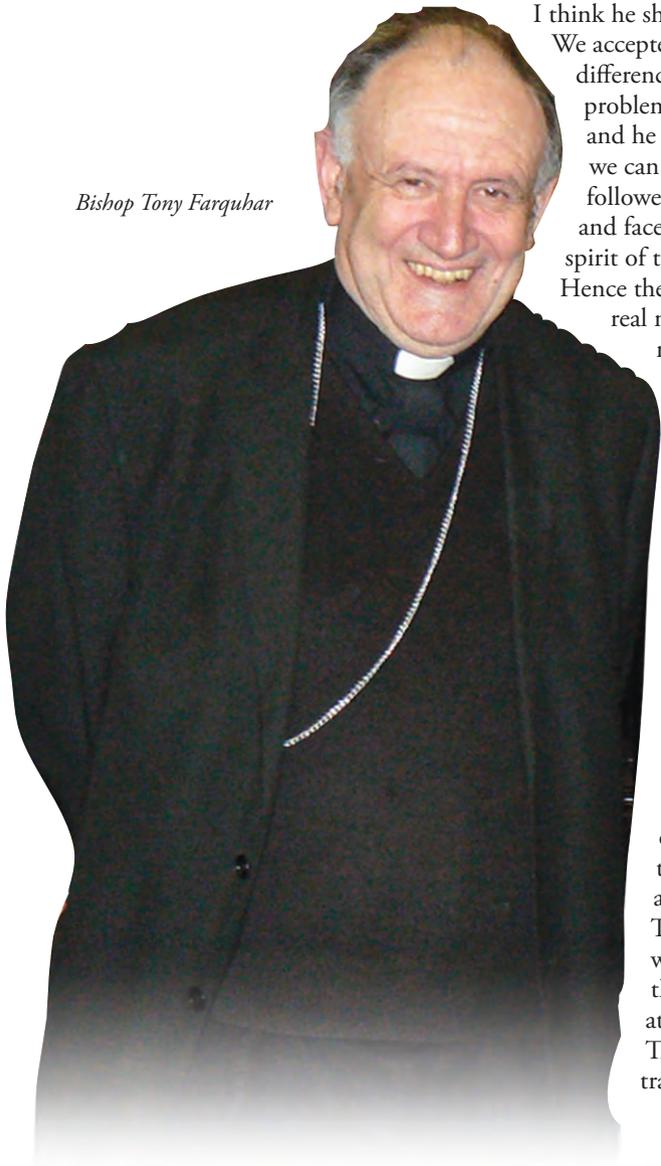
One of his followers, St Gall, made a profound and lasting impression in Switzerland. You may guess how moved we were to learn that this Christian House in Romain Moitier had been founded by Irish missionaries. Then Ireland was described as 'the land of saints and scholars' and the Irish known as the great missionary race.

In the silence we thought about it and above all the sadness of our visit. Here we were many centuries later, representing the Catholic and Protestant traditions in Ireland, coming to this country to try to explain the division and tragedy of our land, the same Ireland, centuries later. Before we left the church, we stood together with joined hands in the Sanctuary, and after saying the Lord's Prayer we prayed that through the healing of the Spirit our land might again become 'the land of saints and scholars'.

An excerpt from the book *Inter-Church Relations - Developments and Perspectives - A Tribute to Bishop Anthony Farquhar*. Edited by Brendan Leahy



Bishop Tony Farquhar





The renovation of the heart

ON BEHALF of the staff and volunteers of the Ballycastle Centre, I wish you a happy, healthy and prosperous 2009. As we hear daily reports of the harsh realities of recession and war, we do well to remind ourselves of a core message of the gospel – and of all the great spiritual traditions – ‘Be not afraid.’ Parker Palmer encouraged listeners recently, on www.speakingoffaith.org, to make the choice not to stand upon the piece of turf called fear that lies within our inner landscape, but to stand on other look-out patches such as hope, fellow-feeling, beauty and appreciation. This is a wonderful and revitalising message. And yet, as I often learn when working with groups at the Centre, we also need to build up this ground in order to stand upon it.

For the past year, we have been redeveloping the site at Ballycastle, with the new Coventry House, a new meeting space being opened in the main house, and finally the renovation of the Croí. The new Coventry is superb, and can now be lived in by our volunteers, staff and members. Our new meeting room is a functional room with beautiful views of Rathlin island. And we are all delighted with the new Croí! Not having access to it for five months was like having an old friend who had been undergoing major surgery, but now the Croí is back up and running again. The renovation of the ‘heart’ of our Centre was a necessary and revitalising phase that we needed to go through. We now look forward to rebuilding the Village and completing the site master plan.

Our continued thoughts and prayers are with our building and grounds manager, Desie McLernon, who has been off ill since July, and we wish him a speedy and full recovery. Congratulations to Agnieszka and Wojciech (house-keeping staff) on the birth of their baby boy, Jacques.

2009 brings many challenges – some new, and some not so new. With the help of Roger Courtney, we now have a new strategic plan that directs us to build upon the work of embracing difference, healing divisions and enabling reconciliation. While it is encouraging to hear stories and see courageous examples of active citizenship in Northern Ireland, it sometimes seems that we only need to scratch the surface to expose our sectarianism and racism.

We hope that you will look for ways to engage, contribute and be at the Centre this year. Come to one of our open events, invite your local neighbourhood, youth or church group to explore issues, experience respite and build community. Or just come, and sit in our new reflective space in the Croí, and stand upon the turf! Perhaps you will be able to see old issues and problems from a new perspective.

Ronnie Millar
Centre Director





‘Weather’ to visit Knocklayd is not the question



ALMOST FIVE MONTHS AGO, Nancy and I arrived at Knocklayd. It was one of the rainiest, stormiest days of the year. Coming from a very dry climate where the sun shines approximately 340 days of the year, adjusting to life on Knocklayd mountain has been a bit of a shock. But despite the extreme climate change in our lives, we are in awe of the beauty that surrounds us every day when we look down in the glen, across the miles of open grassland and the peaceful, unending vistas. We have found a new home in a different setting, and the contrasting climate is helping us to be flexible in our lifestyle for a period of time.

We are very happy to be a part of the Corrymeela community for this year. Our assignment as hosts at Knocklayd gives us the opportunity to meet people from around the world as they use our facility for quiet time, nature exploration, painting and crafts, gardening, creative writing, intense sessions dealing with peace and reconciliation, or simply a place for overnight accommodation. We are being enriched by the different groups we come in contact with, and perhaps this is a greater learning experience on our part than for many we are hosting. Not having been in this area before, we are learning of the Northern Irish culture as well as the many deep-seated problems this area has encountered in the past 40 years. We are now gaining a better insight into the history and recent conflict, and are very happy that in a small way, we can serve through Knocklayd as agents of peace and

retreat for many who need the opportunity to leave the concerns of everyday life for a short while.

Perhaps one of the groups who have visited our site on two different weekends since our arrival, exemplifies what Knocklayd is all about. This is a group of women from the Wave Trauma organisation, who simply come to Knocklayd for a quiet escape and for companionship as they deal with problems and concerns in their daily lives. Although we do very little for them as hosts, such as preparing food or leading any sessions, we have had much contact with them in an informal setting, and can appreciate their need for being at a secluded centre like Knocklayd, where they are finding much peace and joy. They are also very creative, and use this quiet time to quilt, knit, embroider, paint, and do other crafts.

If you haven't visited this beautiful mountain retreat site, may we encourage you to come check it out. We will guarantee you a warm, welcoming fire, good food, a quiet pastoral setting, a place for relaxation and contemplation. However, we will not guarantee you beautiful sunny weather. That seems to be out of our control.

Jake and Nancy Rittenhouse
Resident Volunteers



Adding African pieces to the peace puzzle

I TOUCH THE FIRST LAYER OF GHANA and it feels loud, crowded and hot. A few hours later, I am still on the side, watching the country's video through a little screen – the left window of a minivan. I wonder how accurate should my anticipatory belief have been in order to prepare me for the wonders that were about to hit me. The next day I was thrown inside and gained better eyes.

The small village of Abetifi was the welcoming host of my accreditation as a trainer in the DPC methodology. Dialogue for Peaceful Change is a global coalition dedicated to creating safe spaces to overcome division through a structured and skilled process of mutual empowerment. It is available in locations around the world where new facilitators are regularly trained.

In a five-day course the participants learn the possibilities of the DPC method including a theoretical and personal reflection, then applying it within their jobs, communities, schools, churches, offices and families. Facilitators exchange on their experiences in a world-wide learning environment and this enables DPC to include different cultural elements in the methodology in order to make it applicable in all corners of the world.

In Ghana, at the Ramseyer Training Centre, I was part of the team that held a Dialogue for Peaceful Change workshop, as a pre-event before the General Assembly of ACLCA (Association of Christian Lay Centres in Africa). My colleagues (Jaap van der Sar from the Netherlands, one of the

founders of the DPC project, and Igeme Katagwe from Uganda) and I introduced 26 participants from all over Africa, members of ACLCA, to the content of Dialogue for Peaceful Change, with emphasis on aspects including communication, models to understand human behaviour when conflicts are arising or present, as well as different possibilities to deal with conflicts. Quite some time was also spent on mediation, both formal and informal.

The knowledge provided by DPC is always within the framework of experiential learning, a





method which has proved successful even in the most diverse cultural and social environments. In Ghana the participants learned to be aware of their almost instinctive reactions in conflict situations and to understand that they could bring their own experience and knowledge as a key resource to the workshop. There was an overwhelmingly positive response and an avalanche of requests for future training to be held in other centres.

It felt rewarding and honouring to share my knowledge with such a dedicated crowd of people, so humble in their wisdom, so eager to absorb fresh information, committed to playing a leading role in their troubled society. My co-facilitator Igeme Katagwe says, 'In a nutshell life in Africa is bridled with types of conflict that can have social disruption on unwanted scale. So DPC training with its emphasis on mediative skills is appropriate. With Africa we have to widen the part of mediative behaviour because of the latent conflicts that are on the rise regarding different ethnic communities.' An example of this emerged while in training. On the 30th of November, the ethnic-religious conflicts in Jos, Nigeria started. As almost half of our participants were from Nigeria, lively groups of debates formed ad-hoc and it was interesting to see how all expressed strong opinions, discussions went hot and emotions ran high. Therefore the training became even more relevant as the scenarios turned into reality. Personally I was enriched with new perspectives on conflict's intricate ways and gained a priceless infusion of African insight.

How does a girl from distant Romania get to be a trainer in Africa? Well, the marvel never ceases to amaze me either. But I know there was one good decision that enabled all this, revealing exciting personal and professional paths for me. I said 'yes' to an offer of an internship with Tides Training, advanced by Colin Craig, former Corrymeela Centre director and managing director and co-founder of DPC. But the roots go even deeper, back in 2005 when the 'hill of harmony' embraced me as a long-term volunteer at the Corrymeela Ballycastle Centre. That was the time when the words peace and reconciliation gained consistency for me, acquiring layer after layer of humanness, through stories of despair and salvation.

I returned to Northern Ireland two years later and entered a new adventure, shared between group work at Corrymeela and training insights with Tides. The programme ended in December, but the growth continues to gain confirmation, through ongoing DPC and TIDES projects, potential programmes with Corrymeela but mostly through prospected plans of overcoming division in Romania.

I am still learning to distinguish between the numerous facets of inter-human conflict but I am counting more and more pages of peacemaking, filled with stories of shared knowledge and the hope of a better shared future. The next chapter for me? Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

Iulia Picu



Iulia Picu, 28 years old was born in Constanta, Romania, in an Orthodox priest's family. She studied Philology, Linguistics and Foreign Languages and has experience in social work with underprivileged young people.



Photos courtesy of Paul Sari and Iulia Picu

'Set your troubled hearts at rest,' said Jesus; Trust in God always; trust also in me. There are many dwelling-places in my Father's house; if it were not so I should have told you; for I am going there on purpose to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I shall come again and receive you to myself, so that where I am you may be also...' John 14 v 1-3

Home

If St. Peter allows....

I should like to charge through the Gates of Heaven
 At a thunderous gallop, aged fourteen,
 Riding bareback on a New Forest pony,
 Wearing bright green pedal pushers and a small but jaunty scarf
 Tied nonchalantly round my throat,
 While an open-mouthed, respectable child sporting ankle socks
 And paten shoes, peering over an immaculate, fast-locked
 Garden gate cries,
 'Mummy quick; Mummy look – a GYPSY!'

For I have lived a hard, strange, rickety but free and
 Interesting life.

Once through those Gates,
 My pony and I would gallop on searching for our obvious home,
 A brightly-painted, ancient Romany caravan
 Set in forty shades of Green.

And there
 The beloved Figure I have sought to follow all my days
 Crouches over a driftwood fire, cooking fish, grinning widely
 And waving welcome.

And I know from the not-very-well hidden people
 Waiting behind the caravan, bent double in silent laughter,
 That as of old, He is throwing one of His parties,
 One of His spontaneous, al fresco banquets in the sun;

And I am Home at last.

Sylvia Sands

Full reading:
 John 14 v 1-14

Catch up with Corrymeela



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Corrymeela makes a real difference to the lives of children and families; this depends on your donations. Support our work by becoming a friend of Corrymeela and keep up to date with news, events and community life. Friends also receive a complimentary copy of this magazine.

www.corrymeela.org

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