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SIT IN AWE, BUT I KNEEL IN
THANKS"

Hollie Steele
FRESH STARTS



"IT SEEMS THE WORLD
HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO
DUBLIN'S DOORSTEP!"

Jessica McCall
INTERACTING WITH
INTERNATIONALS



"I AM REMINDED OF
THE IMPACT CU HAD ON
MY LIFE..."

Rachel Gilmore
LIFE ON THE NORTH
COAST



IFES Ireland

REVIEW '08

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Welcome to the IFES Ireland Review of 2007. I hope you will be encouraged by how God is at work in a variety of ways; through Christian Unions on the north coast of Ireland, among international students in Dublin and through an Irish graduate working with French students in Nice. There are also reflections from Brian Callan, new chair of the board, and Hollie Steele, on her first few months as a campus staff worker.

It is a privilege to write my first report as Director of IFES Ireland. Since September, it has been terrific to connect with supporters and students all around the country through preaching and speaking opportunities at churches, CUs and at recent supporters' events. Debbie and I do thank you for your welcome and for your expressions of support. Your prayerful and financial partnership enables all that you are about to read.

At our recent supporters' events, I sought to communicate something of my heart for gospel ministry among students. This has developed from many years of serving as a student and as a staff worker with IFES Ireland (then UCCF Ireland). These gospel convictions and a desire to pursue Biblical patterns of ministry have been acquired, refined and tested in my work as a church pastor in Glasgow and north London and through theological studies including the Cornhill Training Course and a Masters in Applied Theology at the Irish Bible Institute in Dublin. The learning continues!

It has been good to meet again with students. Many things have changed culturally and campus life has been transformed by technology. IFES Ireland's CUs and staff team have also expanded in recent years. But the fundamentals remain unchanged from the time of the early church; the gospel of eternal salvation still needs to be communicated lovingly, clearly and confidently, and lived out with authentic grace and humility. Indeed, as IFES Ireland

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spans the evangelical spectrum, our challenge is always to maintain clear gospel priorities within our evangelistic and discipleship activities. This is what unites us.

Evangelism

God is at work. Students are becoming Christians or are re-committing their lives to Christ, from Stranmillis students sharing the gospel with their housemates, to Cork students engaged in “walk-up” evangelism. CUs are running Christianity Explored courses, and a variety of creative events and evangelistic talks across the island. Art students are communicating their

faith through art installations around the campus, and one Relay worker has recently discovered the knack of “creative loitering” where he simply hangs about the campus café to engage with students! I recently had the opportunity to speak on “Sin and the Cross” at a Christianity Explored course, where an influential member of a college society was riveted, talking for hours afterwards at a CU pancake party.

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As staff and students we need to be encouraged to communicate the gospel with clarity, within a broader culture that is very ambiguous, that promotes many truths and is so subtly opposed to the Gospel.

Discipleship

The years spent in college or university are an incredibly strategic time. It is often in these years that the cost of being a disciple of Jesus comes into sharp focus. Social choices and academic studies so often clash with the demands of making Jesus ‘Lord of all’. Staff continue to promote and encourage students to meet in small groups, investing substantially in training leaders for small group Bible study. At our recent national student conference ‘Mind your Head’, we encouraged students to explore how they live and work out their faith in every area of life, and not to ‘conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of [their] minds’ (Romans 12:2).

In terms of both evangelism and discipleship, it remains my prayer ‘that God may open the door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ . . . and proclaim it clearly as we should’ (Colossians 4:3-4). I remain committed to encouraging students to proclaim the gospel clearly, humbly and graciously, where their words match their lives, as they shine like stars, holding out the word of life.

New staff – New developments

Last year saw significant change in the staff team: Cath Butler moved on to become a trainer with the NI Civil Service, Damien Burke is now working with Kilkenny Presbyterian Church, and Tom Davison finished his time as Director. Tom (who is continuing to do well), Heather and the family are still enjoying life in Swords. Sam Moore has changed role within the team, moving from Belfast campus staff to work in support and project development.

In August we welcomed Hollie Steele and Steve Skinner as new campus staff in Belfast and also welcomed back Peter Kenny (a Relay worker last year) to work with what has affectionately become known as ‘Team Munster’! Hollie, Steve and Peter are great additions to the team, pouring themselves into serving the students in their regions for Christ.

It is also wonderful to acknowledge another exciting new venture. In September, we

Peter Kenny (based in Munster), **Steve Skinner** and **Hollie Steele** (both based in Belfast) joined the IFES Ireland staff team in August 2007.



Hollie writes of her first few months...

FRESH STARTS

“Take my life and let it be, always only all for thee...”

I woke up one day in August and I was suddenly an IFES Ireland staff worker. Six months later due only to God’s grace I still am. ‘But what is a staff worker?’ I’m constantly asked this and it’s a strange reality to be doing a job that no-one really seems to understand. But here I am where God has placed me and although the months have brought many trials, countless frustrations and at times tears, I sit here in awe of the privilege God has given me. I work with future teachers, graphic designers, physiotherapists and many more, and although I never cease to be shocked at how different each CU is, I love the fact that I walk into each one with the same Bible in my hand. I won’t lie, it’s harder than I imagined, more draining than I often admit and at times so disheartening that I just need to get away, but when God calls He equips, and you just can’t but help fall in love with Him more and more along the way.

Studying with small group leaders and

my times with my Relay worker have been the means through which God has constantly refreshed me and deepened my understanding of His word. I couldn’t thank Him more for this. So many aspects of my job are relational, and relationships are amazing things; they can bring such delight yet often demand so much work. Building up relationships with students is no different and it has been a part of my job that I have thrived on while at the same time struggled with. But God’s wisdom and sovereignty are great comforts to me and His profound love for His children inspires me. So six months in I not only sit in awe, but I kneel in thanks for the opportunity God has given me, the people He’s brought into my life and the privilege it is to serve Him in this way, alongside the other staff members. And like a child, I remind myself: **“My God is so big, so strong and so mighty; There’s nothing that He cannot do!”**

Amen Lord.

welcomed the IFES InterAction team to Dublin, led by Jessica McCall. This pioneering new ministry among Dublin’s growing international student population is the result of years of planning by Tom. We look forward to this ministry developing as new workers come through the IFES World network.

As some of you will already be aware, there is significant growth in student numbers in the Dublin area. Over 40% of students on the island of Ireland now study in Dublin. CU numbers in Dublin also continue to flourish, providing considerable challenges to Dublin staff workers Lorraine and Patrick. We continue to pray and plan for the addition of a third staff worker to the Dublin team.

There are new developments within our IFES European region too, where Michael Green, Richard Cunningham, John Lennox, Martin Haizmann, Lindsay Brown and others will be seeking to train up a new generation of student evangelists. There are also plans to link with UCCF’s latest gospel project where a specially produced Mark’s gospel, dedicated evangelistic resources and training materials will be made available to CUs here in Ireland, from September 2009.

All this needs your continued prayers and support. These are ambitious plans which require generous giving. Our target is to raise an extra £35,000/€47,000 to fund these plans. Please continue to partner with us, as together we seek to build a stronger student movement and, God willing, a stronger church in Ireland.

Adam Jones

INTERACTING WITH INTERNATIONALS

JESSICA McCALL

With 15,000 international students from a wide variety of nations and cultures, studying a wide array of subjects, there are wonderful opportunities in Dublin to share the Good News. It seems the world has been brought to Dublin's doorstep!

Enter the IFES InterAction Dublin team - four females from different countries, cultures, experiences and backgrounds. I am from the U.S. (North Carolina), Catrin is from Wales, Sandra is from France and Anna is an Italian living in France. We are currently meeting one-on-one with students from Hungary, Brazil, France, Canada and Nigeria. From once being an international student myself, I can identify with many of these students feeling lost, alone, confused, vulnerable and desperately wanting to make friends.

Our desire is that international students here in Dublin will come to a place of not only hearing about the Lord, but believing in Him, growing in Him, understanding His character, desiring to read His living Word and wildly trusting Him. We are getting to know lots of international students, both non-Christians and Christians. We are spending time one to one, discipling the Christian students so they will have a firm grasp of who God's Word says He is. Many haven't studied the Bible for themselves before, what they have learned is only what they've heard from speakers or pastors. We want these Christians to know God's Word not just to be able to share the Gospel with their friends who aren't yet Christians, but so they may have life themselves, and life to the full!

Oh what a sad day when we think that a good Christian is one who simply attends church services, knows all the hymns by heart and volunteers at the weekend services... yes, these things are so great, but if we're not allowing ourselves to be taught by the Holy Spirit via God's Word we're cheating ourselves. We want these students to live lives that are madly, passionately centered on Christ, so we're pouring time into helping them clearly understand their faith.

This term we plan to work more closely with Irish students in the Dublin CUs to make them more aware of the international student population on their doorstep and on their campuses. We would like to encourage, motivate and challenge them to get to know the international students in their classes. This would be amazing!

Our vision as an InterAction team in Dublin is to see students from every continent, class, culture and religion turn to Jesus and be forever changed in His presence. We will take part in this work in whatever way the Lord leads us. This being a pioneering team, we have had to ruthlessly trust the Lord in each step of this journey. With no foundations already in place, we have felt a bit lost at times concerning the "next step", but the Lord has been faithful in opening and closing doors as we have sought to be faithful in seeking His counsel!

**"...MANY
HAVEN'T STUDIED
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THEMSELVES
BEFORE."**

*The IFES Interaction
Team in Dublin [L-R]
Anna, Sandra, Jessica
and Catrin.*



STEWARDSHIP IFES IRELAND THE VIEW FROM THE BOARD

I first attended a Christian Union (or Bible Society as it was known in UCD) over thirty years ago. I had reached a crossroads in my life, and was hungry for and attracted by the relevance of the Bible teaching presented. The annual conferences were wonderful opportunities to hear some great Bible teaching, but it was the weekly CU meeting that was food and drink to my early development as a Christian. My seven years at UCD were indeed life changing and I have never lost the sense of what God is doing on every campus in the country.

Last year I became Chair of the IFES Ireland Board, when David Cupples stepped down after a lifetime of faithful service. In this position, I welcome Adam Jones as our new Director and really do ask you to commit Adam to your prayers.

While the work of IFES in Ireland traces back to Trinity College in 1919, the current Board structure was only put in place ten years ago. If I was to simply state the function of the Board, I would say that the Board is responsible for the welfare and integrity of our movement. This means we remain focused on:

- our primary aim of having students coming to know Christ,
- our primary strategy of students reaching out to students and
- our primary mechanism being the presentation of God's Word in scripture.

We have always spoken of unity in diversity as we seek to unite all who belong to Christ in reaching others. This core value guides us in our vision of seeing: Students, transformed by encountering Jesus, transforming their campus, society and the world.

This core value of unity in diversity is an important building block of Board effectiveness, reflected not least in keeping a balanced Board membership. The latter includes such elements as demographic, gender, ministerial and academic balance. The Board does not generally involve itself in the day to day management issues of the movement but it does remain responsible for the legal and moral dimensions as well as the spiritual dimensions, often needing to be prepared to make the difficult decisions that stewardship demands. The Board also has a key stewardship role with respect to vision and mission, as it works with the Director and staff to develop and implement a strategic planning process.

The IFES map has changed considerably since my first involvement and indeed over my last eight years as a Board member, but our ministry remains unchanged. We remain a movement that fundamentally inspires and equips students to follow Jesus. As a supporter we primarily need your prayers, but our work also very much depends on your financial support. As a supporter, you can play a key role in encouraging Christian students from your church to get involved with Christian Unions. Be prepared to loan them to our care and to support them in this great mission field that may not be reproduced outside of campus. Transformed and transforming, moving forward for Christ.

Brian Callan



Rachel Gilmore Staff Worker, North West

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LIFE ON THE NORTH COAST

RACHEL GILMORE'S SECOND YEAR AS STAFF WORKER

My first experience of living on the beautiful North Coast was during my time as an undergraduate student at the University of Ulster in Coleraine. My childhood visits from just north of Belfast to the seaside towns of the Coleraine Triangle Area paled in comparison to enjoying everyday life in a small town as a student: shopping trips a pleasant jaunt down a traffic-free street with walks on the beach or a coffee by the sea never far away...! But mostly it is a place blessed with a large number of churches full of people committed to prayerfully seeking God and building His Kingdom on earth. The students here are therefore often in the hearts and minds of the people around, even when they are at home for the weekend!

Being back on the North Coast to work with IFES Ireland, means that I get to enjoy those benefits on a more full time basis: being part of a church; finally being able to successfully manoeuvre the one way system; becoming a local... almost! More importantly, I get a unique insight into the outworking of the vision and prayers of the Staff Worker and CU committees who served here during my time as a student: authentic friendships being formed between Christians and their classmates who don't know Jesus.

Last June some Coleraine CU members organised a Habitat for Humanity team to Ghana and invited their classmates to join them. Some of the students involved came to faith along the way, another recommitted herself to God and others are still asking questions about Jesus. It's encouraging to see a couple of them coming to CU and even to the recent IFES Ireland Conference 'Mind Your Head'. Another CU leader is about to begin studying the Bible with a couple of friends who've been asking questions about his faith.

The nature of campus life in a small town means that friendships run deep among students; I get glimpses of the deepening of those relationships between Christians as I talk to individuals and can even see the love of Christ in them as they walk around campus.

It's been a new experience to travel across the mountains by Lough Foyle to work with the Christian Union group on the Magee campus of the University of Ulster. During my student life, I heard bits and pieces about our fellow CU in Magee, so it has been exciting for me to see first hand the strengthening of this group which has grown from 5 students to 12 since 2002. The students in the CU are particularly enthusiastic this year and I am encouraged that this CU, once a flickering flame is now shining brightly on campus in Londonderry.

I am constantly reminded of the impact CU had on my life and am so excited to see current students experience the vast wisdom and grace of our amazing God. Thank you for praying as we seek to inspire and equip students in the North West and across Ireland.

**THERE'S MORE...
THERE HAS TO BE**

THE BARE FACTS

The figures summarised here are based on the audited accounts for the year ended 31st August 2007 of IFES Ireland (NI) Trust and IFES Ireland (ROI) Trust. (This summary excludes any income or expenditure related to 6 Ormond Drive, Swords.) We are pleased to be able to report that a surplus of £5,203 was generated which will be added to accumulated reserves. In a year of considerable change within the staff team, we praise God for how he has provided to meet our needs. In addition to this surplus the 2007 Appeal generated £8620 towards a future additional Dublin Staff worker. IFES Ireland continues to benefit from tax relief on donations in both jurisdictions.

We are grateful to all who continue to partner with us prayerfully and financially. Thank you. Please continue to pray that we would see increased fruit from our initiatives to widen the regular support base of IFES Ireland. This will enable us to grow the campus-based team and so inspire and equip more students in Ireland to follow Jesus.

LOVE WORKS

DEBORAH BYRNE IN NICE

“LOVE NEVER GIVES UP; love cares more for others than for self; love doesn't want what it doesn't have; love doesn't strut, doesn't have a swelled head, doesn't force itself on others, isn't always “me first,” doesn't fly off the handle, doesn't keep score of the sins of others, doesn't revel when others grovel, takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, puts up with anything, trusts God always, always looks for the best, never looks back, but keeps going to the end.

LOVE NEVER DIES. Inspired speech will be over some day; praying in tongues will end; understanding will reach its limit. We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always incomplete. But when the Complete arrives, our incompletes will be cancelled. When I was an infant at my mother's breast, I gurgled and cooed like any infant. When I grew up, I left those infant ways for good. We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us! But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: **Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love.**”

Paul, founding father of the Christian church (from 1 Corinthians 14 in 'The Message')

I always wondered what Christian workers actually did. Especially student workers. Don't they just drink coffee all the time, wear funky glasses, tell students they're great and ask people for money? Yes. Does part of their work also entail extensive planning meetings, one-on-ones, discipleship, bible study and training? Yes. But what else? During my studies, two IFES workers befriended me, let me into their lives and “took me under their wing”. They loved me. And that is what an IFES student worker should do. Every day, ALL the time.

The IFES team has been here in Nice for almost three years now. The CU (which is

INCOME	£
Gifts (individuals)	162,520
Churches	27,419
Trusts & Legacies	24,625
For IFES	22,709
Tax (Gift Aid)	36,554
Other	2,995
Total	£ 276,822

EXPENDITURE	£
Salaries	177,431
Travel	21,359
Training	5,340
Student Conferences	4,134
Communication	17,172
Office	4,123
Promotion	5,264
Fees	5,598
To IFES	25,057
Miscellaneous	6,141
Total	£271,619
Surplus	£5,203

Exchange rate of 0.67 as per average 2006/07

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“STUDENTS ARE NOT HUNGRY AND THIRSTY FOR DISCUSSION GROUPS, TRENDY FLIERS AND CATCHY SLOGANS. EACH INDIVIDUAL WANTS DESPERATELY TO BE LOVED.”

called GBU in France - Groupes Bibliques Universitaires) was originally made up of a small handful of students. The IFES team then arrived with a boom, bursting with ideas and enthusiasm and the group swelled and flourished, and we now have regular groups meeting in four faculties throughout Nice, a cosy little community of about 30 regular students, fortnightly film debates, and monthly themed events. Aren't we great?

But why did I come here? Having spent the last four years studying languages (French and Spanish) in NUI Maynooth, I drew my studies to a close with the intention of spending some time in France or Spain and of looking into post-graduate work. I had also thought of working with IFES. In the end, I chose to go to Nice on an IFES team. I felt that doing this combined two separate desires of both wanting to spend time abroad, and to work with this organisation which I feel was instrumental in the developing of my faith and that of other students' lives across Ireland and the rest of the world.

France is a country renowned for its deep sense of pride in culture, history and tradition. Sadly, secularism holds a grip on French consciousness that is unequalled by its European neighbours. Dating back from early secularisation laws of the state, the French have sought to privatise religion, faith and belief to the point that wearing a cross symbol in schools is illegal. Likewise, meetings of religious groups in state areas are banned. The

GBU thus must work within a strict set of laws.

French GBU students are allowed to study the bible together as a “cultural book” in the university, but praying is strictly forbidden and they are not allowed to advertise any events on university property.

It could be that the GBU students would give up, allowing these laws to stifle their little movement. But instead, some determined and charismatic individuals who saw this group as fundamental for Christian students and those who were not yet Christians began to pray, and today there are GBU groups all over France who work within these laws. Even recently in Nice, a student committee was

formed to oversee the planning and running of the different GBU groups, which is a huge step in student initiative. Other events such as an International Concert, a Valentine's evening, film debates and discussion evenings are also being planned.

Just today, I had a conversation with a student who had some concerns. This student felt that I was full of ideas, but challenged me about whether I was truly loving the students. Throughout the last six months here in my work in Nice, I have been challenged and humbled by the love lived out by the students. One African student, seeing my need for a bike, insisted on buying me one, despite the fact that he had little money himself. Another student, hearing I was sick, came to my house late at night with medicine. My chat with the student reminded me that the events we hold don't matter, nor do the planning committees or film debates, if we do not have love. Do I love the students I encounter? Do I care about their needs, their worries and their hurts?

Honestly? Not always. Students are not hungry and thirsty for discussion groups, trendy fliers and catchy slogans. Each individual wants desperately to be loved.

Please pray that God will help me as an individual, our team and the students to live a life of love and sacrifice for each other here in Nice, and most of all, for those who have not yet heard. According to Paul, love works.