

"THIS JOB IS MANY THINGS, BUT PREDICTABLE IS NOT ONE OF THEM!"

Hollie Steele  
LESSONS FROM EUROPE



"GOD CAN USE SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS A LITTLE BOOK TO CHANGE A LIFE"

Jonny Best  
FREE



"SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL IS HAPPENING"

Brian Callan  
FROM THE BOARD



IFES Ireland

# REVIEW '10

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

'The Bible; it's alive inside' was the title of a recent CU talk I gave in Dublin. And how true this is where, as a fellowship of CUs, we are committed to understanding the message of the bible and being shaped by its truth in all areas of life. CU staff and students have studied Mark's gospel as part of the Free gospel project. Thousands of gospels have been given away all over Ireland and the living message of Jesus Christ has been challenging and transforming many.

However the CUs exist in a world that has rapidly changed. Belief in the Christian God was broadly accepted and culturally it was almost impossible not to believe in God. But now many would entertain the idea that is it possible not to believe, with a strengthening aggressive new atheism promoting a more extreme message — that it is actually impossible to believe at all. Albert Mohler (author of 'Atheism Remix') urges us to 'articulate, communicate and defend the Christian faith with intellectual integrity and evangelistic urgency. We should not assume that this task will be easy and we must also refuse to withdraw from public debate and private conversation in the light of this challenge'. What a challenge to our fellowship of CUs, student leaders and CU staff, but one we are happy to champion!

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Albert Mohler; Atheism Remix

### **FREE from and FREE for: transformed by encountering Jesus!**

This year's gospel project has refreshed and renewed our focus on reaching this generation of students with the gospel. Students are encountering Jesus as they read Mark's account of the life of Jesus. In the space of seven days I met three students from three different countries with one outcome — a life changing encounter with Jesus. Freedom from guilt, self and fear; freedom for God. 'The benefit you reap leads to holiness and the result is

eternal life' (Romans 6:22)... what a contrast to the hopeless alternative on offer from new atheism.

### **FREE: inspiring and equipping!**

Free has given the staff team plenty of opportunities to equip and train students. CU leaders and students have taken the initiative to engage with their campus, through friendships and special events. How inspiring it was to see the entire gospel of Mark enacted by students at Joint Colleges as they performed The Mark Drama, directed by Andrew Page. From plans to perform this drama on campuses, to provocative exhibits at the Art colleges, 500 people attending a CU event in Galway to hear the testimony of Tony Anthony (author of 'Taming the Tiger'), and UL CU inviting Christian surfer evangelist John McCarthy to speak... Is it not wonderful to see Christian Unions uniting together for the sake of the gospel, within the diversity of background and giftings?

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### **THREE!**

The impact of a third CU staff worker in the Dublin/Galway region has greatly strengthened the ministry. The extra staff time has been hugely welcomed by students. In DIT (Ireland's largest campus with 35,000 students) the CU has grown from 6 to over 30 and we have connected with students in Sligo and Sallynoggin. Thank you to all who have supported this initiative and please be aware of our need to financially consolidate this position. You will also be encouraged to see the InterAction team's ministry among international students continuing to take shape through campus and church based Global Cafés.

A growing slogan within the staff team is 'We are IFES: IFES is us' as we try to connect and identify with our CU leaders and groups more closely. We hope to explore ways of involving our student leaders more closely in the workings of the fellowship over the coming months, especially helping them relate to their student representative on the Board. We also look forward to consulting with student leaders at e:con, our annual leadership conference. Last year's speaker at e:con

was Pete Lowman and this year David 'Monty' Montgomery will be giving the bible readings.

### **FREE-forward**

IFES World is holding its quadrennial conference for IFES directors in Malaysia. We will be finalising plans towards 2020, within IFES core commitments to scripture engagement, community and prayer. Closer to home, we look forward to welcoming a new team of student leaders and we will be running summer teams to Peru, Dublin and possibly Spain. We also hope to finalise plans to open an office / student resource centre in Dublin. Last summer, we said farewell to Lorraine Wylie and Sam Moore and welcomed Catrin Petherbridge, Cosmin Pascu (both in Dublin) and Phil Howe (Belfast) to the team. Please visit our website to read their profiles! This summer sees Rachel Gilmore (NW) and Hollie Steele (Belfast) moving on to other ministries. Rachel will be working with ECM in France and Hollie may be pursuing further studies, possibly in Costa Rica and Cuba. Please pray as we seek to fill their posts and as we seek new Relay workers and InterAction team members.

How wonderful to know the bible is 'alive inside' and, more so, to know life inside us in Christ. Let us continue to pray for and support this generation of students – pray that they will feed on the Word of God, nourishing their souls so that they can hold onto and hold out the word of life.

**Adam Jones**

## LESSONS FROM EUROPE

### HOLLIE STEELE

From Belfast to Weisbaden, to Arhus, to Budapest... the job of a CU staff worker is many things, but predictable is not one of them! When I look back over the past year and a half I am not only struck by God's profound graciousness but the unique flare and originality he has in all that he does.

He has given me the privilege of representing IFES Ireland in an IFES European Seeker Bible Study Network focusing on small group evangelism through leading and training people in studying the bible with non-Christians. The network is made up of 16 staff and students from countries around Europe including Bulgaria, Italy, Bosnia, Hungary, Germany and Spain. We have not only had the pleasure of forming lasting friendships with one another, but also learning from author and evangelist Rebecca Manley Pippert and her husband Dick, Martin Haizmann (IFES Europe Director) and Edith Vilamajó (IFES Europe Regional Team). They have not only taught and challenged me with diligence and truth but shown me patience, support and, like Jonathan with David, they have continuously helped me find 'strength in the LORD' (1Samuel 23:16).

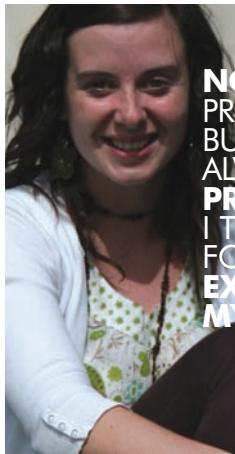
Being part of the network has completely transformed my approach to my work with IFES Ireland. Meeting people from all over Europe who are involved in student

ministry and learning about their different contexts and challenges has been incredibly encouraging, humbling and challenging and has broadened my perspective on our ministry here in Ireland. When you are doing a job in which you often feel isolated, you can easily become introspective. I truly thank God for expanding my vision through this network.

Paul writes in Philippians 3:8, 'I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my LORD.' Not only has the network transformed my perspective of ministry but it has transformed my understanding and knowledge of Jesus himself. In many ways it has been like meeting him for the first time all over again and this will stay with me for the rest of my life. Often we teach about Jesus' deity, but Becky has opened my eyes to Jesus' humanity and although it will always remain a mystery it is one which draws us closer to the heart of God. One of our core values in IFES Ireland is a commitment to dynamic engagement with the bible. I now know what that can look like and have a renewed hunger to not

only teach our students how to read God's word but to study, understand and be changed by it. Not only to know who Jesus was and is and what he did, but to know him.

Becky's teaching on the doctrine of the incarnation and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has brought 'colour' to my understanding of the gospels and evangelism. After our first meeting in Wiesbaden, I was deeply challenged in terms of my own personal evangelism – something which so often tragically 'disappears' for those involved in



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'full-time' Christian ministry – and reminded that I must not only be teaching and encouraging my students in evangelism but I must be modelling it as well. I must not allow God's call to preach the gospel to all nations to be silenced in my own life simply because of working predominantly in Christian contexts. Realising this has also led me to regularly ask my students about their own personal evangelism and not just about that done by the CU as a whole.

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One of the main goals of the network was to not only benefit the members individually but to channel the training down to the movements they represent and it has been amazing to see what opportunities this has opened up for IFES Ireland. Last term we were able to organise two regional evangelism training conferences – one in Avoca and the other in Belfast – with Rebecca Manley Pippert. Out of these conferences many students have found the confidence to read Mark's gospel with their non-Christian friends or set up evangelistic bible studies. The feedback included comments such as "I just really needed reassurance that I could be a witness to him even though I'm not perfect", "Brought my passion back", "It was good to hear suggestions of ways to bring up matters of faith naturally in our conversations" and "Touched me hugely, challenged me greatly. First thing like this I've been to...".

The conferences perfectly complimented the Free gospel project which CUs across the country have been taking part in this year and also allowed me to run campus-specific training for students interested in starting an evangelistic bible study group or reading through Mark 1-2-1 with a friend. I pray that the CUs will be able to run many evangelistic bible studies this term, in friendship groups or as follow-up to evangelistic outreaches.

The network last met in November 2009 in Budapest and it was incredible to see how many evangelistic bible studies have sprung up all across Europe since we first met in Germany. It is amazing to see how God multiplies the small offerings we bring in his name. It also provided us with an opportunity to receive feedback and critique in leading studies and discuss how to train our students in areas such as inductive bible study and personal evangelism.

In Psalm 133 we read about how good and how pleasant it is to be united together, 'for there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.' I thank God that I have not only had the opportunity to meet more of my 'brothers and sisters' across Europe, learn from them and be sharpened by the study of his word but for the countless blessings he has bestowed upon me personally, on the network, and on IFES Ireland. Once more reminding me that the job of a staff worker is not often predictable but it is always a privilege.

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

*Supporters make up the largest part of the IFES Ireland family. Many IFES Ireland supporters were themselves members of Christian Unions. We asked a few of them to tell us about their experience of CU and what they have been up to since graduating...*

### **David Crawford, Stranmillis**

Attending Stranmillis College of Education from September 1971 to June 1975, I became a committed Christian during the summer of 1972. This made a huge difference to the way I thought about things, especially how I viewed the Bible Union which I had occasionally attended during my first year at the college. For my last 3 years at Stranmillis I made sure I attended all the Bible Union meetings I could. I went on the Bible Union retreats and attended the student conferences in Greystones as well as a bible study group. In my final year at college I was prayer secretary of the Bible Union.

In 1973 I attended my first Scripture Union camp as a helper. Since then I have been involved in over 40 camps, 31 of which I led and the last few of which have been in Russia and Ukraine. I started my teaching career in Brownlow High School (latterly Brownlow Integrated College) in Craigavon in September 1975. Very soon after that I took on responsibility for the SU in the school and was involved until I retired from teaching in 2009. I attend

Waringstown Presbyterian Church and have been in a position of leadership there for over 30 years.

So how did UCCF/IFES help to prepare me for these positions of leadership? While at Stranmillis I was privileged to hear very many good speakers who gave me a solid foundation for my faith. I also learnt how to speak about my faith to others, how to lead a bible study group, how to pray (both in private and with others), and the importance of having a regular quiet time with God. I had the opportunity to mix with and learn from others of different denominations, which is something I have valued in the intervening years. I learnt the principals of leadership and of working on a committee; how to distinguish between what is not important, what is

... **HOW TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN WHAT IS NOT IMPORTANT, WHAT IS IMPORTANT AND WHAT IS VERY IMPORTANT; THE ESSENTIALS OF THE GOSPEL...**

## FROM THE BOARD

As a scientist, I cannot look at a flower without appreciating the chemistry that gives it fragrance and colour. I get that great sense of our creator God, the essence of his imagination culminating in something small and beautiful. As I reflect on 2009, I am filled with the same sense that something beautiful is happening on the campuses across our land and I feel a great sense of the privilege of being involved. I delight in the prayer letters of our staff, as their relationship with the Lord pours out of every page and I never take for granted that they are there, as the title of a well known book puts it, doing 'something beautiful for God'.

A recent milestone was the departure of Sam Moore after nine years involvement as a Relay worker, Staff worker and Project Manager. We wish Sam well in his new role with Innovista Ireland and our prayers are very much with him after the death of his mum last December. We welcomed Phil Howe as Belfast staff worker and Cosmin Pascu and Catrin Petherbridge (formerly InterAction Team) as Dublin staff. The recruitment of a third Dublin staff worker was another IFES Ireland vision realized and was the subject of our annual appeal in the last two years. We also welcomed Jonathan and Kah Foon Gillespie to lead the Dublin InterAction Team, supported by Becky Ots. Again, this team and vision are realized through the auspices of the wider IFES family. These appointments give us much cause for

important and what is very important; the essentials of the gospel; the importance of mission and my responsibility to others whether at home or abroad; the privilege and responsibility of giving time/money; and that God has a plan for our lives and that he guides us when we have decisions to make. Very often in my life when faced with making decisions either as part of a group or as an individual, I have returned to the principals that I learnt as a student. This has given me a great confidence in the faith I have tried to live since I became a Christian.

### **Andy Bowie, TCD**

My name is Andy Bowie and I was involved in the Trinity College Dublin (TCD) Christian Union from 1989 through to 1997, during my undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Currently I am living in Lucan, Co. Dublin, married to Pam, and have three daughters, Emma, Lucy and Alice. I'm part of Trinity Church Network ([www.trinity.ie](http://www.trinity.ie)), and am still in TCD(!), currently as an Associate Professor in Immunology within the School of Biochemistry and Immunology. My research focuses on how cells in our

body respond to and fight viruses. As a believer involved in biology, I feel really privileged to be engaged in reading God's two great books – the Book of Scriptures, which reveals our incredible Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the Book of Nature, which tells of his great works in creation.

My time in TCD CU was a wonderful blessing: I made some great friends, many of whom I am still in contact with today, including one I still meet with monthly to pray together. I also met my wife in the CU – we started going out while on committee together (which caused a bit of worry to the then staff worker for Dublin, Adam Jones!). Many of the experiences, adventures and events that I was involved in during my CU years were formative and a few really stand out. Two major missions we undertook were 'Crosstalk' and 'Foïnse'. These were an opportunity for believers from different backgrounds to work together, take some risks and be creative in engaging with the college culture of the day. Another real highlight was being part of, and then leading, small groups and discipleship groups.

I've been involved in church leadership within Trinity Church for the

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past 10 years, and as I reflected on what I learnt during my CU days, there were three things that came to mind that still shape my approach to life and ministry today. Firstly, the practice of discipleship, especially through small groups. Secondly, the primacy of the calling of all believers to mission and evangelism. Thirdly, the centrality of Jesus in everything we do and in how we think about God, people, church and life. Nigel Lee, who was head of UCCF during some of my student years and a speaker at one of our



**Brian Callan**  
Chair of the IFES  
Ireland Board

thanks, and we pray God will use each of these lives to further build his kingdom. 2009 saw some fresh faces on the Board of IFES Ireland, namely Rev. John Woodside, Prof. Stephen Williams and Dr. Ted Cox (returning after a break of eight years). All three will be a great asset as the Board nurtures the welfare and integrity of our movement. The Board has also been enhanced with our two student representatives, Tom Campbell and Ross Coulter. Their presence on the Board is critical as we pursue the primary strategy of being a movement

where students reach out to other students, as we present God's word.

This brings me neatly to this year's focus on the Free gospel project. While the Lord promises that his Word will not return in vain, we urge you all to support this project in your prayers. We are ever aware of the battlefield on which we challenge all that is not of God and of our dependence on your prayers. Adam Jones has just completed a very successful tour of supporters' meetings across the country where he met with many of you and our final vision for 2010 is that we would connect you into a regional support meeting. Where these do not exist we would love to initiate them because this is the support that our staff and CU teams most need. Please continue to partner with us in prayer, in this vital ministry of inspiring and equipping students to follow Jesus.

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2009

The figures summarised here are based on the audited accounts for the year ended 31st August 2009 of IFES Ireland (NI) Trust and IFES Ireland (ROI) Trust.

We are thankful to God for the response to our emergency appeal in October 2008 which put us in a good position at the start of the financial year. However, the continued fluctuation in the value of sterling against the euro puts pressure on the monthly financing of IFES Ireland. Please pray that our euro support base will increase to make this a lessening issue. In spite of this we have seen a surplus of funds this year which have been returned to the reserves against the previous year's deficit. However current financial forecasts indicate on-going funding challenges for 2010.

We are grateful to all who continue to partner with us prayerfully and financially. Thank you. Please continue to pray that more people would begin to give regularly and that initiatives such as 'Plant a seed' (our legacy pack), student giving and team support raising will bear fruit and allow us to build a wider and more stable support base. This will enable us to grow the campus-based team and so inspire and equip more students in Ireland to follow Jesus.

TCD CU missions, used to say 'the main thing is that the main thing remains the main thing'! As believers from many diverse church backgrounds, we did well to remain focused on such wise words. In fact one of the most profound and prophetic aspects of my time in TCD CU was the way that followers of Jesus from conservative, charismatic, Pentecostal, denominational and non-denominational churches worked together in order to proclaim the gospel of Jesus to our peers – long may this unity of purpose in diversity continue within IFES Ireland!

### **Ralph & Cherie Depping, UCC**

It's almost 10 years since we graduated from University College Cork. Ralph had completed a course in Electronic Engineering and Cherie in Applied Psychology. Although our courses had little in common, we had a shared desire to follow Jesus and found our years as part of the CU to be very helpful in building us up in our faith and equipping us to live it out among our student peers.

We both served on the CU committee for a time and benefited greatly

from the responsibility of helping to lead our student group. We were equally blessed to simply be part of the CU and have regular and frequent opportunities to discuss, share and encourage one another in our faith. We met many different people with differing personal backgrounds, church backgrounds and nationalities and yet the gospel was common to us all. Being connected to IFES Ireland provided us with some great teaching and training experiences – Ukraine summer team, leadership training, Irish Conference. We are sure that God used these times to prepare us for the years after student life.

Today we are married 7 years and are blessed to be parents to two great kids! Ralph works as a software engineer and Cherie is a stay-at-home-mum. As in our student days, our desire is to live out our faith on a daily basis among our neighbours, friends, workmates and in our local community. To this end we are glad to be part of our local Baptist church where Ralph serves as an elder. As a SAHM, Cherie is perhaps now using little of her academic qualifications. However, all that we learnt from God's word during our time as students is

still relevant and ever helpful for all that daily life holds, whether it's in the office at work, at home with the children or chatting to neighbours.

We are greatly encouraged that many of the students in our church have got involved with their CUs and we continue to see God's blessing as they grow in maturity as Christians and contribute both to their CUs and the life of our church. Peter Kenny's (Munster staff worker) involvement in our church has also been a valuable means of strengthening our connection with what's happening in the CUs today.

We know that our time in UCC CU impacted our lives deeply. We formed wonderful friendships which continue to be a support and encouragement to us to serve the Lord. As students we learnt and experienced many things! Perhaps the most important was how central the gospel is to who we are and everything we do and how to live out our faith daily with this foundation. We pray that God will continue to use the work of IFES Ireland to train and equip students for life and godliness.

## FREE JONNY BEST (QUB CU)

The Free gospel project excited me from the start by its potential to equip students to bring friends to Jesus. At our very first CU meeting of the year I met Tim\*. It turned out Tim wasn't a Christian, but was really seeking God. We got chatting and eventually decided to meet up and talk about it. I gave him a Free gospel and asked him to read a little bit for the next week if he could. He came back with loads of questions, having read four chapters. I had no idea how to handle most of these but God must have done something because he was very keen to keep going and to keep learning.

I have always been a bit intimidated by personal evangelism, feeling totally inadequate for it. But through this experience, I realised that God can use something as simple as a little book to change a life. About two months after meeting Tim, I was chatting to a friend who knew him well. She said that she had seen a massive change in his life and that he was so much happier with life.

We are still meeting up. Tim hasn't committed to God yet but he is coming closer and closer and it is such a blessing to be involved. I probably would never have had the courage to start meeting up with Tim without the Free gospel project, and I believe with all my heart that pretty soon the angels will be celebrating another son who has turned his life over to Jesus.

\*Name has been changed



<b>INCOME</b>	£
Gifts (individuals)	218,395
Churches	32,005
Trusts	33,910
For IFES	22,467
Tax (Gift Aid)	40,441
Other	5,006
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 352,224</b>

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	£
Salaries	240,292
Travel	26,299
Training	5,390
Student Conferences	5,794
Communication	11,182
Office	4,000
Promotion	4,621
Fees	7,132
To IFES	24,361
Miscellaneous	9,087
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 338,158</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>£ 14,066</b>

Exchange rate of 0.87 as per average 2008/09

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