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IFES Ireland: the Christian Unions

review '13

BOARD CHAIRMAN **STEPHEN GARDINER** WRITES...

What could be better than students inviting their fellow students to read the Bible with them! This year we had the Gospel Project UNCOVER, based on a wonderfully contemporary looking copy of Luke's gospel. It came complete with QR codes, links to Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, but of course the best part lay inside the covers! The Board are extremely grateful to UCCF for their generous provision of these gospels, and their warm fellowship and support in so many other ways.

In fact, this link will be strengthened even further in the coming year; for, as I have explained in a letter to supporters, Adam is taking up a post with UCCF this autumn. He goes with our sincere thanks for six years of tireless effort as Director of **IFES Ireland: The Christian Unions**, and with our best wishes and prayers for his future ministry.

This has also been a time of change on the Board. I would like to pay tribute to our outgoing members, Professor Stephen Williams and Joanne Richards, and to warmly welcome Claire Ebbinghaus (Belfast), Edwin Tutty (Limerick) and Trevor Watson (Coleraine). Finally, we are most appreciative of the input of our student reps on the Board, who this past year were Aoife Beville (UCC) and, again, Emma McAllister (QUB).

STOP PRESS! We've held back the circulation of the Annual Review this year to bring you the exciting news that our new Director will be Dr David Montgomery. "Monty", as he is better known, has a long-standing passion for the CU movement, substantial ministry experience, strong leadership gifts and significant theological insight. Please pray for Monty and his wife Gwen at this time of transition to new ministries.

Director's Report

ADAM JONES DIRECTOR

In this article [my last for the IFES Ireland Annual Review], I reflect on some of the highlights of this year and over my time as Director.

Jesus: Lord of the harvest!

It has been a packed year framed by conferences, missions and training events in the context of much personal one-to-one ministry with students, given by CU Staff Workers and RELAY workers. The blessings from UNCOVER will be felt for many years to come, as students experienced with excitement the gospel at work, as the living word of God was read with insight and courage with their friends. The CUs have built on this personal approach to evangelism, with many holding missions earlier this year. Campus Evangelist, Michael Ots spoke at this year's Queens CU Training Mission. The lunchbar and café style evenings were honest and significant attempts to faithfully communicate the gospel with apologetical relevance and clarity. Rico Tice spoke with winsome passion to a packed Dublin-wide CU mission evening as part of the Dublin Gospel partnership's ONE LIFE city mission. It was wonderful to see Sam Green (AFES) engage with Islamic Societies on several Dublin campuses. Praise God that again this year we saw students finding faith in Jesus.

Behind the scenes, CU Staff Workers supported CUs, training and envisioning CU leaders to think biblically, deepening theological engagement and equipping them for the task of reaching the campus.

Jesus: Lord of the years

Looking back over the years, it is encouraging to see how the fellowship of CUs has grown and strengthened. My first-ever visit to Queens CU as Director back in 2007 was a quiet and almost anonymous event! CU leaders' commitment to the fellowship was fairly limited. However today, through a lot of consistent and hard work by the team, it is encouraging to see CUs catch and embody the mission of the fellowship with growing sharpness and purpose. Also Pre-term is now jointly run by all Belfast CUs, facilitated by IFES Ireland for the benefit of all Belfast fresher students.

The increased sense of confidence in IFES Ireland gave rise to a new conference for all CU students in Ireland; the CU Annual Conference. In its second year, the CUAC 2013: Body Building: Why Church Matters encouraged students to love and build biblical gospel churches. We are delighted that David Cook will teach at CUAC 2014: Living Word; God Speaks, with Rico Tice confirmed for CUAC 2015.

The Team today

This year, we had a team of 8 IFES Ireland funded CU/Admin staff and 12 self-funded CU Staff Workers, RELAY or Interaction team members. We also had several Associate Staff Workers (ASWs) helping us out. This year we welcomed Peter Grier as the CUSW for



Munster. Three staff have been married this year (Rachel to Nick, Catrin to Len and Phil to Jasmine). We say farewell to Robert McFaul (CU Staff Worker in NW) who is joining the Cornhill Training Course in Belfast before commencing further ministry training. Unfortunately due to continuing financial challenges, we will be carrying a CU Staff Worker vacancy in the North West; we hope to fill a position in Dublin in the medium term.

Jesus: Lord of the future

I am sad to be leaving IFES Ireland after over fifteen years of association with the movement, as a student, CU Staff Worker and as Director, but am incredibly grateful to God for giving me the opportunity to continue student ministry with UCCF. I will be part of UCCF's leadership team, working as the North West team leader and based in Manchester. I will continue to remember Monty and the team prayerfully as the work continues in Ireland.

I want to say a huge thank-you to all the students, CU Staff Workers and RELAY/ Interaction volunteers I have worked with over the years, especially Sally, whose support has been so solid. I am also hugely indebted to the prayer and financial supporters and supporter groups who have backed us over these years. Finally, I would like to thank my wife Debbie along with my children Aaron (15) and Éilis (12), who have supported me through these years, for the sake of the fellowship.



INTRODUCING **Dr. David Montgomery**

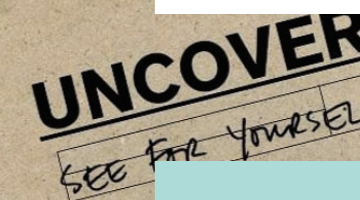
'MONTY', as he is better known, is no stranger to CUs or to IFES Ireland, having spoken at a number of teaching events, conferences and retreats all over Ireland. A native of Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim, he attended Belfast Royal Academy, and the University of Stirling where he was CU President for two years. He then served for one year on the UCCF Universities Executive, representing Scotland. He received a First Class Honours degree in English with Music, and followed that up with a Master of Divinity degree from Regent College, Vancouver. He has recently received his Doctor of Ministry from Covenant Theological College, St. Louis.

He has worked for the Youth Board of the Presbyterian Church in Lucan, Co. Dublin, and was ordained in 1998 serving in Stormont and Knock Presbyterian churches in East Belfast. He then worked for the Mission Board of the denomination before moving to Greystones Presbyterian, Co. Wicklow. He is a member of the PCI's Christian Training Board and teaches at the Irish Bible Institute and for Taylor University's Irish Studies Program. He is married to Gwen, a Dubliner, enjoys reading crime fiction, listening to most types of music, writing and cheering on Manchester City.

Can we share our vision with your church?

Special presentation for your church or prayer meeting available from our CU Staff Workers or Board member.

FOR MORE INFO
PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICES.

MATTHEW CURRY RELAY, BELFAST WRITES...

THE WALLS WERE COVERED WITH POSTERS, THE ROOF DRAPED WITH POLICE TAPE AND VARIOUS CRIME SCENES WERE SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE ROOM...

...A few abnormal individuals were going around in full forensic suits. The atmosphere was buzzing with a mixture of excitement and apprehension. This was the launch at Jordanstown of the CU Gospel Project, UNCOVER.

Naturally, all of this led many to ask the question, 'What is UNCOVER?' UNCOVER was a free gospel initiative by UCCF and IFES Ireland. It aims to encourage CU members across the UK and Ireland to study the gospel of Luke with their non-Christian friends. Luke's words were presented in a way that was aesthetically pleasing and easy to carry. QR codes were inserted throughout the package of Luke's gospel, allowing people to use their smart phones to access explanatory material online.

At the launch of UNCOVER at Jordanstown, one student exclaimed that the massive potential of the UNCOVER project could be realised if the 80 students present were to take two copies and study Luke with a non-Christian friend. He was right, the potential was massive.

However, that is not to say that there weren't difficulties for students who took up the challenge. One student reflected on his experience by admitting to a major concern that he didn't have all the answers. Undoubtedly this concern was a common one. Students were apprehensive about taking a small, intimate study in which every tough question was directed towards them. But it was most encouraging to see how those worries were often overcome as students discovered how Luke's gospel

answered the questions that it raised. Indeed, one student found that as the 1:1 studies progressed, his friend enjoyed the sessions and was often the keener participant in the study! This seems to be a trend that many students have encountered: people *are* interested and *do* want to see who Jesus is!

Through experience, the students learned not to assume that their friends had any real knowledge of the gospel. They were challenged to think carefully about the language they used and not to rely on Christian jargon. It encouraged them to think of how to communicate their faith in a way that engaged their friends.

Uncover proved to be a useful tool for students in their evangelism. One student said, 'Having Uncover and the CU gave me an excuse to do it.' He had an appropriate tool at his disposal, something he could use to engage his friend with the Christian gospel. Let us give thanks to God for how he has been using the UNCOVER project through Ireland as a vehicle for the advancement of the gospel!

"UNCOVER: THE LIVING WORD OF GOD ... READ WITH INSIGHT AND COURAGE WITH THEIR FRIENDS."

INTERVIEW
Aoife Beville



TELL US Aoife how you first got involved with the CUs?

I heard about CU while I was in school, my best friend had started university and was enthusiastically telling me all about the CU, so I couldn't wait to get stuck in once I started in UCC. I called along to the CU stand at the societies' day and I got roped into making pizza for the inaugural event of the year. The rest is history.

How are you currently involved with IFES?

I have just retired from my role as Public Relations Officer in UCC CU and am about to graduate. For the past year I've also been one of two student representatives on the Board of IFES Ireland, so I've been blessed by seeing how God works through his servants behind the scenes

How will you be involved next year?

I'm going to Bologna, Northern Italy with IFES InterAction for the next 1-2 years to work with a pioneering CU there. I'll be participating in a voluntary programme where graduates help out CU movements in other countries. Bologna is the oldest University in the world, yet the CU has only begun to take shape there in the past two years. I will be encouraging, training and equipping Italian students to share Christ, meeting with students to explore God's word together, and by God's grace sharing his glorious gospel.

How has your involvement with the Christian Unions shaped your Christian walk?

My time in CU has defined my years at University and has been crucial in my own relationship with Christ. Through my involvement in the CU as a Mission Team on Campus I have seen God's love for the lost enacted through the ground-breaking gospel of Christ, I have grown in my knowledge and understanding of God's Word, and I have been sharpened by enthusiastic discussions with other believers and with sceptics. God has powerfully used the CU to help me to understand more of His evangelistic heart. I would absolutely recommend involvement with IFES Ireland: God is at work through his people, and shining his light on campus is a priceless privilege. If you're not at University please pray continually for those who are and encourage them to use their gifts in CU.

How can we pray for and support you as you go?

Please pray that God would use me to make Him known in Bologna, and that He would put it on people's hearts to support my ministry, praise God I have about half of my funding. Pray that God prepares me for ministry before I leave. (Email aoifebeville@gmail.com for updates.)

One year on...

PETER GRIER CU STAFF, MUNSTER

MIDNIGHT, and we're lying back on Tramore beach with the moonlight pouring over the water. The town has gone to sleep and only thing still awake is the incessant pounding ocean on the beach. No, it's not holidays for me quite yet – these are days away with the new committees of CIT CU and WIT CU for training, fellowship and planning.

The past year has brought a lot of joy. But it has also brought a realisation of how far there is still to go. One year ago WIT CU wasn't in existence, and CIT CU largely consisted of people from one church background. Now, Waterford campus has a sustainable group meeting regularly. It is gradually becoming more and more outward focussed as the group's hearts are changed by the gospel, to the extent that in one of their final meetings, several friends came along, asking questions for hours and mulling over eternal things. Meanwhile CIT CU, who've grown in many ways this year while doing UNCOVER, now have a wonderful mix of people on committee, from Baptists to Anglicans to Pentecostals to Community Church people, all with an earnest passion to reach their campus for Christ even more so than the many who heard last year – the foundations have been laid, and now it's exciting to hear the types questions on their lips:

"The terms are short; I want to make best use of every moment we have. How can we reach out during the first few weeks of the year when the new students are deciding what to live for?"

Flowing from delving deeper with the committees into understanding our Triune God – the One who has eternally been united in loving relationship within the diverse Godhead – and living in the light of that, one thing that has started to make evangelism more joyful on the campuses is Christian Persuaders.

Most of the Christian students in the CU tend either to have a great passion for truth or a great sensitivity to what it is to be a relational human. Yet in our Triune God we find both Truth, and a creator who creates us in His relational image. So it's no surprise that we find the early Church caring so much not only for proclamation of Truth, but doing so relationally and engagingly so that some came to faith, some wanted to hear more and some scoffed.

Christian Persuaders is an IFES initiative to raise up a generation of church leaders and graduates who'll be able to persuasively win hearts and minds to Christ in the public

square of our universities and colleges when invited to speak by students. Watch this space for more information!

"... WE FIND THE EARLY CHURCH CARING NOT ONLY FOR PROCLAMATION OF TRUTH, BUT DOING SO RELATIONALLY..."

Belfast Preterm

RACHEL GREER CU STAFF, BELFAST



PRETERM is a four day retreat designed to help students going into first year transition from school to university. Preterm was originally facilitated for Queen's University students, however, over recent years we have seen all the Belfast universities come on board. This has allowed students from across Belfast to benefit from excellent collective teaching and crossover of ideas while still having specific individual university time.

Starting university can be a scary time for many and so Preterm is a great opportunity to prepare and encourage Christians to be decisive and disciplined in their relationship with God. We all know of young adults who have walked away from their profession of faith because they had not made their parents' faith their own. So Preterm is a vital opportunity to equip Freshers in the moments before they enter into campus life.

Preterm is also a great opportunity to introduce students to CU and inform them of the CU's purpose and vision for the year ahead. We have seen many students become passionate about sharing their faith in university because of the preparation that Preterm has given them. As new students they have the opportunity to form friendships during a hugely formative time in their lives and so we encourage Freshers to think about how they can share Jesus with their friends.

Please pray for Preterm this year as we prepare, pray that those starting university would find out about Preterm and sign up and that they would start university with their eyes firmly fixed upon Christ. Preterm this year is 1st-4th September in Castlewellaan Castle. If you know someone about to start university in Belfast then please sign up through the QUBCU website: www.qubcu.com



ARE YOU STARTING UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE THIS AUTUMN?

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS?

Almost every campus in Ireland has a Christian Union; a student-led society that exists to see students transformed by encountering Jesus, whether by hearing the gospel for the first time or through vibrant Biblical ministry aimed at nurturing a living faith.

IFES Ireland: The Christian Unions

We are a fellowship of CUs, providing staff-support, leadership training and resources to enable CUs to be effective Mission teams on campus.

FRESHERS WEEKEND!

1-4 September 2013
Castlewellaan Castle

for all those starting at QUB, UUU, UUB, Stranmillis & Belfast Met
qubcu.com/preterm-2013

For further details and up-to-date student news go to www.ifesireland.org and email us your details so we can connect you to your local CU. Or call us on **+44 28 90242100**.



Financial summary
2012

The figures summarised below are based on the audited accounts for the year ended 31st August 2012 of IFES Ireland (NI) Trust and IFES Ireland (ROI) Trust.

Following on from returning a deficit in 2010/2011 we have been able to return a small surplus in 2011/2012. The ever-changing economic climate continues to impact our support base and continued fluctuations in the value of sterling against the euro put pressure on the monthly financing of IFES Ireland. The Board took the decision to carry a vacancy in the current financial year on the basis that whilst finances are stabilising there is not enough guaranteed monthly income to sustain the staffing levels. IFES Ireland would need to see an extra £3000/€3500 pledged per month to enable the current staff worker vacancy to be appointed.

We are grateful to all who continue to partner with us prayerfully and financially. Thank you. Please continue to pray for the Board and Staff of IFES Ireland as they work on fundraising initiatives to secure the work of IFES Ireland for future generations. All of which enables more students in Ireland to be inspired and equipped to follow Jesus.

INCOME	£
Gifts (individuals)	163,079
Churches	37,276
Trusts	31,002
For IFES	22,012
Tax (Gift Aid)	38,512
Other	2,638
Total	£ 294,528

EXPENDITURE	£
Salaries	202,308
Travel	21,413
Training	4,614
Student Conferences	560
Communication	13,123
Office	7,673
Promotion	5,723
Fees	7,269
To IFES	24,836
Miscellaneous	3,823
Total	£ 291,342

Surplus £ 3,186

Exchange rate of 0.87 as per average 2011/12

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CUAC 2014
11-13 April

LIVING WORD:
God Speaks