

## PCNI Gives Corrymeela Centre \$5000 Grant

The PCNI is pleased to announce that it has presented a \$5,000 grant to the Corrymeela Centre, in recognition and support of its 4 decades of vital, inspired leadership in Northern Ireland's un-realized search for peace and reconciliation.

Corrymeela "The Hill of Harmony," located about a mile from the village of Ballycastle, on Northern Ireland's north eastern coast, is not just a place, but is a Christian community built upon the conviction that Christ unites people in breaking down the divisive walls of hostility.

### Corrymeela History

Early in the 1960's, Ray Davey, the Presbyterian chaplain at Queen's University in Belfast, motivated by memories of WWII prisoner of war experiences in Germany, dreamed of creating a place in Northern Ireland where people from different traditions could come together to affirm what they had in common.

Davey, later to become the first Leader of Corrymeela, called together a group of students, teachers, business leaders and clergy to explore how his dream might be translated into reality.

In 1964, the group learned that a holiday lodge near the village of Ballycastle was for sale. They visited the lodge, and immediately knew that Corrymeela was the site they had dreamed of. The rest is history. With ingenuity and

enthusiasm and very little money, volunteers renovated the buildings, solicited donations, organized summer work camps, and formalized their visions for the future.

Corrymeela has always been about community. Its earliest documents state:

"Corrymeela is a community of Christians representing all of the main denominations in Ireland, bound together by prayer, mutual support and commitment to become instruments of God's peace in church and society.

Corrymeela is essentially a group of ordinary Christians, convinced that living Christ's message of acceptance and forgiveness is absolutely essential in a polarized nation."

# NORTHERN IRELAND JOURNAL

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## Revelation

And I saw before me  
A new Belfast  
And a new Derry  
After the years of trouble  
Had passed away

And there was no more shooting  
Or knee-capping  
There was no more  
Hijacking buses  
Or bombing of cars

For in the new Constitution  
It is written, the politicians  
Will ascend and descend  
The steps to Stormont  
Debating with tolerance

And I saw green and orange  
Parade shoulder to shoulder  
Unfurling the banner of the Dove

Fiona Grimshaw





## PCNI COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2005

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# President's Message

By

The Rev. Dr. James G. Macdonell

**G**reetings from the *Presbyterian Committee for Northern Ireland!* In this first issue of our PCNI newsletter, we want to introduce you to our committee's efforts in support of peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

American Christians have always been both fascinated and appalled by the specter of Irish Protestant and Catholic Christians killing each other in the name of Jesus! Brothers killing brothers.....communities divided.....a nation split asunder by conflicting theological and secular ideologies.

*Am I my brother's keeper?  
The muttered cry was drowned  
By Abel's life blood shouting  
In silence from the ground.  
For no man is an island  
Divided from the main.  
The bell which toiled for Abel  
Toiled equally for Cain.*

*As long as people hunger,  
As long as people thirst,  
And ignorance and illness  
And warfare do their worst,*

*In any of God's lands  
I am my brother's keeper,  
I dare not wash my hands.*  
- Irish Poet John Ferguson  
(used by permission)

Sadly, American Christians have historically been a part of the problem in Northern Ireland. During the 1960's, American Protestants and Roman Catholics supplied huge amounts of the money used to purchase guns and ammunition for paramilitary groups in the Loyalist and Republican communities.



By 1969 the escalating sectarian violence was being called "The Troubles," as people were killed for no other reason than that they were Catholics or Protestants. And with each new murder there was a public funeral, which became an occasion for angry displays of community grief and protest.

Between 1969 and 1989, nearly 3,000 people were killed in Northern Ireland, which suggests that today every adult in Northern Ireland knew someone who died at the hands of sectarian violence.

In 1989, concerned members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) decided that we needed to become part of a peaceful solution for Northern Ireland, rather than remaining part of its problem. They formed *The Northern Ireland Working Group* under the auspices of the PCUSA's Worldwide Ministries Division.

In 1999, while remaining relationally accountable to the PCUSA Worldwide Ministries Division, this group became an independent organization of Presbyterians and others supporting peace in Northern Ireland and was renamed the *Presbyterian Committee for Northern Ireland*.

In its brief 16 year history the PCNI has been deeply involved in the Northern Ireland peace process. In our next issue, we will detail past activities and describe our hopes for the future.

## Irish Summer Institute Set For August 15-27, 2006

**S**ince 1990, the PCUSA's *Presbyterian Committee for Northern Ireland*, in conjunction with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, has sponsored the biannual *Irish Summer Institute*. The purpose of the Institute is to provide an ecumenical opportunity for American Christians to observe the dynamics of peace building and reconciliation taking place in Northern Ireland.

An unfortunate perception is held by many Americans that the past thirty years of violence in Northern Ireland reflects a struggle for dominance between Irish Protestants and Catholics. This simplistic view is often made without exploring the great variety of other political and economic issues that have fueled the conflict.

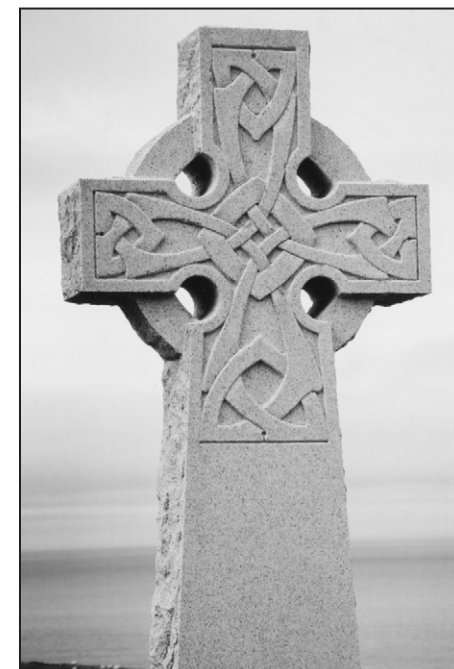
*The Irish Summer Institute* is a two-week long study seminar which provides participants with an opportunity to meet with Northern Ireland's leading religious, political and community leaders in a series of informal dis-

cussions and tours designed to reveal how committed Irish Catholics and Protestants are in the forefront of the efforts to implement and build lasting peace initiatives in Northern Ireland.

The *Institute* begins in Dublin and then travels to Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland. Everywhere they travel, participants will meet with the country's leading religious and political leaders, and will have an opportunity to visit and explore many of Northern Ireland's historic places of history and beauty. Leaving Belfast, the group will travel north to Corrymeela, Northern Ireland's best known reconciliation center, located in Ballycastle on the magnificent coast of County Antrim near the Giant's Causeway. From there the Institute will travel on to the cities of Derry, Armagh and Omagh.

Those interested in participating in this invaluable opportunity to explore first-hand the dynamics of peace-building, should contact the

*Institute* Co-leaders: the Rev. Dr. James G. Macdonell, 9708 DePaul Drive, Bethesda, MD 20817, [jim.nancymac@verizon.net](mailto:jim.nancymac@verizon.net), or Dr. Marie T. Hilliard % the Connecticut Catholic Conference, 134 Farmington Ave., Hartford, CT 06105, [ccc@ctcatholic.org](http://ccc@ctcatholic.org). *The 11th Biannual Irish Summer Institute* is scheduled to take place August 15-27 of 2006.



# Presbyterian Committee For Northern Ireland Reaches Out

## Business Education Initiative Designed To Address Unemployment

The Business Education Initiative (BEI) program was initially designed by leaders of the Presbyterian Committee for Northern Ireland (PCNI) in the early 1900's as an innovative response to Northern Ireland's long-time serious unemployment problems.

In 1995 the BEI program was officially established as a partnership effort of the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities and the public sector Training and Employment Agency of the United Kingdom.

The BEI program's primary aim is to offer qualified undergraduate students from Northern Ireland with an opportunity to

study business and management in the United States. Its purposes are: to develop the academic and applied skills of ambitious and talented students in business oriented subjects; to create an opportunity for able young people to realize their ambitions in the context of the wider world; to replace sectarian division in the Northern Ireland community with unity towards the common goal of international business success.

It is a further hope of the BEI program that after their academic year of study in the U.S. and after returning home to graduate from their institutions of learning in Northern Ireland, the students will seek and find jobs in Northern

Ireland, thus helping to improve their nation's business life while contributing to a resolution of Northern Ireland's unemployment situation.

In its first decade of life, the BEI program has grown into a broad ecumenical partnership which today not only includes its Presbyterian forebears, but also the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, the United Methodist Related Schools, Colleges and Universities, the Association of Episcopal Colleges, and several other independent institutions.

Participating institutions within these associations offer placement to Irish students in commer-

cially-related subjects, waive tuition payments for the students for one year, and help arrange work experience and short internships. The Northern Ireland government covers the students' costs of transportation to and from the U.S.

To qualify as a BEI candidate Irish students must be enrolled in good standing at either Queens University, the University of Ulster or the Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education and apply directly to the BEI program. Candidates who are chosen are then placed in American institutions by a committee of Irish and American educational representatives.

## 174 Trust Endorsed By PCNI

In 2003 the Presbyterian Committee for Northern Ireland (PCNI) presented a grant of \$4,000 to The 174 Trust located in a socially disadvantaged area of North Belfast, Northern Ireland, which has been plagued by an increase of sectarian tension and violence.

The grant was given in recognition of 174 Trust's outstanding "cross community" efforts as "peacemakers and bridge builders" in providing programs which build peace and promote reconciliation in a deeply divided area of a troubled city.

The Trust was established in 1982 by concerned Christian members of two local congregations, the Duncairn Presbyterian and Antrim Road Baptist Churches who purchased the premises at 174 Antrim Road.

Under the dynamic leadership of Director Rev. Bill Shaw, and in order to confront rising sectarian divisions in the area, in 1995 174 Trust took the bold step of purchasing the church property and build-

ings formerly occupied by the Duncairn Presbyterian Church after the congregation moved to a different location when the community changed demographically from Protestant/Loyalist to Catholic/Republican.

Today, the Trust is committed to "Providing equal opportunities for all users of their premises," and is providing rays of hope in a sectarian area otherwise blighted by divisive gloom.

Its innovative programs include a pre-school playgroup, an after-school club for young children, disability and youth projects, an action committee confronting poverty, an Irish-language nursery program, an Alcohol Anonymous group, an Narcotics Anonymous group, and a senior citizen's group.

Furthermore, Bill Shaw representing the Trust, serves on a large number of public sector committees which provide sports, mental health, employment, housing and other vital services for the Lower Antrim Road community.

## Irish American Scholar Program Complements Business Education Initiative

The Irish/American Scholars Program is the sister program to the Business Education Initiative (BEI). It allows for American students which participate in BEI to study in Northern Ireland for up to one year. Up to twenty five (25) full time placements are reserved for American students at Queen's University, the University of Ulster, or at the Belfast Institute for Further and Higher Education.

Students apply through their home college or university which then nominates them to the Irish/American Scholars selection committee. Each American college or university which participates in the BEI program is allowed to nominate up to two students. A minimum G.P.A. of 3.0 is required for acceptance.

If accepted, Irish/American scholars will register at their home

institutions and be subject to whatever tuition fees and other requirements regularly apply to students who study abroad. In Northern Ireland they will be responsible for housing, food, travel, books and other living expenses, some of which may be covered by financial aid.

Applications must include a two page essay on why the student wants to participate, at least one letter of recommendation, a copy of the student's academic record and the student's college and home addresses and telephone numbers. The application must be accompanied by an Irish/American Scholars nomination form which is available from the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities. The deadline for applications/nominations is January 21st.

## Vine Community Center Aids Disadvantaged In Belfast

In the fall of 2002, representatives of the Presbyterian Committee for Northern Ireland (PCNI) visited the Vine Community Centre located on Crumlin Road in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and presented its Director Linda Gibson with a \$4,000 grant in recognition and support of the Centre's innovative "cross-community" programs.

The Vine Centre was estab-

lished in the early 1970's by members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland as a Christian Community Development Center providing community development programs for local citizens living in a fast-changing sectarian community. It moved to its present new facility at 193 Crumlin Road in early 2002.

Today its community development programs include

classes for young children, teenagers, unemployed adults and pensioners. Specifically it provides job placement and secretarial training programs for teenagers and young adults, and in an area of extremely high unemployment, it also conducts job re-training programs for out-of-work adults, and cultural and educational programs for older pensioners.



# COMMITTEE MEMBER PROFILES

## Ambassador Josiah Beeman

Ambassador Josiah Beeman was born and raised in San Francisco. Throughout his life he has pursued his interest in government and politics, as well as, his commitment to the Presbyterian Church. His career has included many leadership positions in California and Washington, D.C.

The Ambassador's involvement with the Church began in 1963 when he was named Director of Education for the Northern California Council of Churches. He went on to serve as the Presbyterian Church's Secretary for International Affairs and Director of its Washington, D.C. office. During the late 1980's Mr. Beeman initiated the establishment of the Presbyterian Committee on Northern Ireland and the Irish Summer Institute to foster exchanges between clergy and laity of the United States and Northern Ireland. Since that time, he has played a major role

in the Church's efforts to promote peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

Concurrent with these responsibilities, Ambassador Beeman began his governmental career as Chief of Staff to California Congressman Phillip Burton. He held that position both before and following his 1967 appointment to the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco. In 1975, Mr. Beeman was named Staff Director of the U.S. House of Representatives' Democratic Caucus, and then served as Director of the State of California Washington Office. In 1980, he was named Director for Political and Legislative Affairs of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. From 1983 to 1994, Mr. Beeman served as President of his own government relations firm, Beeman and Associates.

Ambassador Beeman was

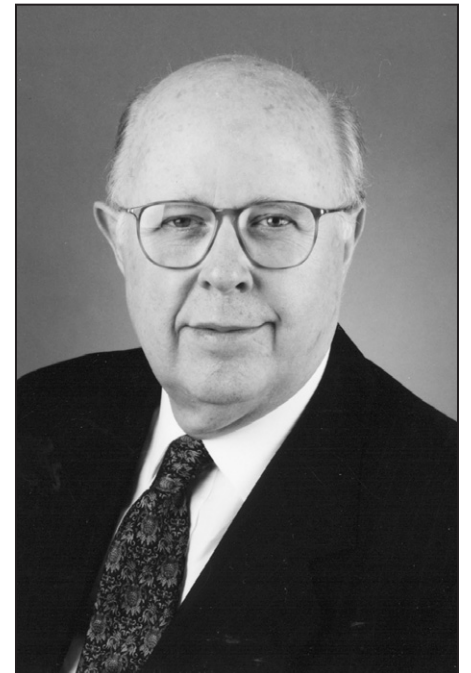
sworn in as U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa in April 1994. During his tenure, United States-New Zealand relations markedly improved including the historic visit by Prime Minister Bolger to meet with President Clinton in the White House in March 1995. This visit marked the first time in over 12 years that New Zealand's Prime Minister had visited the White House. He hosted President Clinton in his state visit to New Zealand in September 1999 (the first visit to New Zealand by a U.S. President in 32 years.)

Following his return from New Zealand, Ambassador Beeman was chief of staff for the U.S. International Broadcasting Agency, which consists of the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe and Radio Free Asia.

He is now formally retired from government service and serving on several boards and

committees.

He is married to Susan Beeman and they have two children, Olivia Louise born on June 8, 1999 and Josiah Horton Beeman VI born on December 10, 2002.



**Ambassador Josiah Beeman**

## Dr. Marie T. Hilliard

Dr. Marie T. Hilliard is presently involved in three distinguished careers, simultaneously. She is the Executive Director of the Connecticut Catholic Conference, the public policy and advocacy office of the eight Roman Catholic Bishops of Connecticut. She is a practicing registered nurse, who has focused her preparation on children and medical ethics. She is a Lt. Colonel, U.S. Army Nurse Corps, Reserves, and holds the Meritorious Service Medal. She has been Assistant Clinical Professor, University of Connecticut School of Medicine since 1991.

Dr. Hilliard holds graduate degrees in maternal-child health nursing, religious studies, canon law, and professional higher education administration. Her doctoral dissertation was in medical ethics. She holds a licentiate degree

in canon law.

As a Lt. Colonel in the United States Army Reserves, she is acting Deputy Brigade Commander of the 5th Brigade, 98th Training Division, responsible for all United States Army Reserve medical training for the northeastern United States.

Working with the Presbyterian Committee for Northern Ireland, she is co-leader for the Irish Summer Institute and has represented the United States Catholic Conference in the Republic of Ireland and the Province of Northern Ireland. She has met with religious and political leaders, including President Robinson of the Republic, Member of Parliament John Hume, Bishops of Derry Mehaffey (Anglican) and Daly (Catholic). She attended the White House Conference on Trade and Investment in

Ireland in 1995, invited by President Clinton.



**Dr. Marie T. Hilliard**

She was named an Outstanding Young Woman of America in 1970. She was

recognized by the Connecticut League for Nursing for Outstanding Contribution to Nursing in Connecticut in 1995. In 1995 and 2001 she received an Army Commendation Medal and in 1996 she received the Meritorious Service Medal, the highest peacetime award, from the United States Army. In 1997 she was given the Agnes Ohlson Award for Outstanding Contribution to Nursing Through Political Action.

She has served on numerous boards related to her professions and been published extensively in several professional journals.

In addition to all of her careers and her involvement as a volunteer in church and community activities, Dr. Hilliard sings in the choir of St. Lawrence O'Toole Parish Council in Hartford, Connecticut.