



Dialogue Ireland

Annual Report

2011

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Introduction

This report details the activities of the Director of Dialogue Ireland, Mike Garde, and members of the Dialogue Ireland Executive Committee. Increasingly the Director finds the support of the committee very important as new and different issues arise. It is not possible to keep the work of Dialogue Ireland going without involving the different gifts and expertise brought to Dialogue Ireland by those who work with us. If and when the director retires the operation of Dialogue Ireland will certainly change, but thanks to the support of our volunteers the fundamental activities of Dialogue Ireland would continue.

Prior to 2001 Dialogue Ireland was an Ecumenical Trust operated under the Churches. Following extreme psychological pressure on the Church leaders by groups like “The Pilgrim House”, Scientology and Tony Quinn it was decided that it would be best to be independent of, but continue to work with, the Churches. It was also recognised that in order for Dialogue Ireland to accomplish its mission it had to be seen to be independent. In order to assist society Dialogue Ireland also had to be willing to recognise cultist attitudes and tendencies within the churches most of Dialogue Ireland’s personnel were members of. Dialogue Ireland’s mission has developed further and is no longer a faith based organization - but rather one concerned about cultism and the protection of human rights.

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/about/>

Mike Garde is the Director of Dialogue Ireland and is supported by a strong executive committee. Because of harassment in the past this committee is not listed here, but any information about them is available to genuine enquirers.

Overall Context

The overall situation seems to suggest fragmentation and a perceived loss of meaning and direction in society. Both the clerical abuse scandals and the unprecedented economic recession leave the human spirit very low. There is also a sense in which people feel that they are politically disempowered. Though there was a strong expression of protest through the ballot box in the election of February 2011, there is a continuing widespread sense of disappointment with the government who seem to have adopted the same agenda as the last one despite having promised a clean sweep.

The new government's default position is that they have to implement the Troikas agenda, something they knew before taking office. The loss of authority in the spiritual and political sphere seems to lead to some people to search for alternatives, while others reject religion all together. Others seek solace in material preoccupations. Revelations of abuse that have become public in recent years have caused widespread public mistrust towards mainstream religious organisations, and a perception that such institutions are concerning themselves with dogmatic conformity.

In addition to this challenging background, Dialogue Ireland continually finds a lack of awareness concerning issues relating to cultism. This lack of awareness is present right across our cultural spectrum, from the common member of the public to the highest levels of political office. We were grateful to Deputy Paschal Donohoe who, at the request of the Director of Dialogue Ireland, asked a Dáil question on the issue of cultism. The response garnered from the Minister of Justice and Equality, Mr. Shatter, is highly illuminating:

“The Deputy will appreciate that the word ‘cult’ is a chameleon-hued word that may get its colours in any given context from the subjective views of the speaker, and that there are no clear, specific, manageable, and universally accepted criteria for identifying cults.”

Our charitable status prevents us from lobbying government. However, as part of our work, we continue to advance the debate on this topic.

Existing Irish law seems to be very specific on this issue, as this extract from the 2009 Charities Act illustrates:

“For the purposes of this section, a gift is not a gift for the advancement of religion if it is made to or for the benefit of an organisation or cult—

(a) the principal object of which is the making of profit, or

(b) that employs oppressive psychological manipulation—

(i) of its followers, or

(ii) for the purpose of gaining new followers.”

We put forward the view that this issue should not be dealt with reference to Article 44 which the reply proposed as the reference point for this debate, specifically in relation to freedom of religion and freedom of conscience. We would argue that the issue is not about freedom of religion but about group influence and the field of undue influence.

The statement that, *“It is of course a reality that one person’s cult may be another person’s faith,”* is commonly used to relativise the experience of those who encounter cultism, cultist tendencies and attitudes found in the cultic milieu. To use a medical analogy one person’s cancer is another person’s health?

Most people understand that N. Korea is a cultist state, and that S. Korea is a democracy. Most people understand that the Catholic Church is a genuine Confession of the Christian religion, but they also realise that it can have cultist tendencies and attitudes in relation to the issue of its response to child sexual abuse and vulnerable adults.

However, it is not the religious or theological content that defines whether a group has cultist tendencies or not, but rather whether it controls and removes the person's autonomy and renders infantile its members as we find in some groups.

The full discussion, as well as the complete Dáil question and its response, can be found on our blog:

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/2012/02/04/dail-question-addressed-to-the-minister-for-justice-and-equality-mr-shatter-by-deputy-paschal-donohoe/>
-

This is the background we find ourselves in, and it is in the dialogue between these trends and perceptions that our work emerges. Understanding these cultural nuances is necessary to understanding current trends that have influence and impact on Dialogue Ireland's work.

Religion

The crisis shows that the lack of the study of Religion and the declining theological options have left a very uneducated public in both the content of faith and lacking the tools to engage with the new religious landscape. The current religious education model does not seem to be working. The programmes in the primary sector are not leading to secondary school connectivity, as Confirmation is at best initiation into family or culture and at worst a rite of exit. Catholicism is viewed as a birth “rite” religion. Baptism as the door to all the sacraments is thereby bypassed and the catechetical journey is not successfully actualised. There seems to be a lack of awareness of the impact of Faith Schools on the national character of Education.

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/2011/11/28/the-clontarf-report/>

We note that, through its inaction, the Catholic Church continues to be perceived as giving tacit support to issues resulting The House of Prayer. The Cardinal has refused to assist the victims involved, and failed to discipline a parish priest of his diocese who flagrantly abuses Canon law in assisting and giving succour to a sectarian and schismatic Christina Gallagher. It also defies belief that the Archbishop of Tuam has not acted beyond stating that the House of Prayer does not enjoy his support. The faithful are still travelling long distances to a shrine which, in Catholic terms, is bankrupt and does not have at its centre the primary sacrament of the Catholic Church, namely the Eucharist. It is not enough to distance oneself from Christina, a clear line in the sand must be drawn so there can be no ambiguity.

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/category/house-of-prayer/>

We will reference this and related issues later in our report in regard to the Catholic Church's response to other cultist groups.

The Internet is at Centre of our Mission

We have consciously shifted our emphasis onto the internet and our web site and blog which has now the best archive in the field of Cultism in Ireland.

- <http://www.dialogueireland.org/>
- <http://www.dialogueireland.wordpress.com/>

This is where the future of communication will be. Also it provides a great resource for people to access information on groups. It also provides a place where people can share experiences, often availing of anonymity to do so. To date these are the results. Blog Stats Summary Tables

Number of visits to the Dialogue Ireland blog

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2009	693	1,306	2,405	3,043	2,463	3,624	11,028	5,764	10,289	9,377	15,147	10,169	75,308
2010	22,167	11,823	14,643	14,239	15,034	13,137	13,021	10,854	25,286	21,549	14,856	13,373	189,982
2011	16,544	18,090	16,325	13,696	15,230	20,480	22,795	24,786	26,274	20,004	33,580	28,401	256,205

- 2,654 views on our busiest day, September 26, 2011.

As of April 2012 over 10,000 comments have been left on our blog.

Anonymous

Previously we reported the emergence in 2008 of a group opposing Scientology called Anonymous. This group arose around issues connected to internet censorship by the Scientology organisation. There has been a lot of ill defined comment which confuses this group of individuals with attacks on the Fine Gael web site etc. It is also known as Chanology and this is well explained in the following link.

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Chanology

Here are two important articles for those trying to understand this phenomenon.

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/2012/04/06/hacking-is-it-a-crime-the-transgressive-politics-of-hacking-in-anonymous/>
- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/2012/04/06/anonymou-s-theyre-watching-and-they-can-bring-you-down-by-joseph-menn/>

Report by subject

1. Islamism:

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/category/islamism>

Islamism is generally associated with violent forms of radical Islam. In fact, this violent form of Islamism tends to divert attention away from the form which uses peaceful means to further its aims. So there are many Muslims who have achieved quite high positions within Irish society who are working on a twin track. Like our own IRB which organised by conspiratorial means to overthrow the existing order, so the aims of the Muslim Brotherhood are directed to seeing Shariah law enforced here. Contacts with Turkish Muslims connected to the Gulen movement have been discontinued when research revealed this group was allied to an Islamist element of the Turkish Government which is moving from its secular roots. We are now in a new situation since the Arab Spring. Radical Islamists have been the target of oppressive regimes which have generally been supported by the West to stop those Islamist forces coming to power! Catch 22.

2. Scientology:

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/category/scientology>

The Scientologists are continuing to appear at trade shows like the Festival of Mind, Body and Spirit, where they offer various services through Narconon, Criminon which are recruitment related. They are encountering heavy resistance from **Anonymous** as they alert the public to the dangers these various front groups like the **Citizens' Commission for Human Rights** anti-psychiatry position represents. TV3 had a documentary that

featured Matthew McKenna, Dialogue Ireland's Scientology consultant, which interspersed commentary on three groups in its programme:

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/2011/09/27/tv3-irelands-secret-cults/>
-

3. Landmark:

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/category/landmark/>
-

A training programme with its origins in Scientology. It was known as *EST*, but now has become a for-profit corporation. We continue to get requests for information about them.

This year the Labour Presidential candidate brought this group to the attention of the public as did a Liveline special on them:

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/2011/06/04/rte-liveline-covers-landmark-education/>
-

We have also received confirmation that many priests are actively supporting the courses offered by Landmark as an adjunct to Catholic formation. We received calls from concerned Catholics one of whom lost their partner of 40 years of marriage to Landmark. She is totally consumed by her involvement. Senior clergy seem unwilling to address the concerns reported to us. It is noteworthy that Cardinal Brady still retains a connection to Landmark through its Mastery Programme as he features in one of their photographs:

- <http://www.masteryfoundation.org/about/board/index.php>
-

4. Jehovah's Witnesses:

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/category/jehovahs-witnesses/>

Though they are seeing a decline in numbers they are the most active group in regard to evangelisation both in rural and urban contexts.

5. Buddhism- Rigpa:

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/2009/04/07/briefing-document-on-sogyal-rinpoche/>

Rigpa, located near Castletownbere, is a Tibetan Buddhist centre that also has offices around the country. They continue to have great effect in the field of thanatology especially in the hospice movement. We received a number of calls with concerns about their activities. They represent the group most commented upon on our blog.

6. FWOB- Friends of the Western Order of Buddhists

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/category/the-dublin-buddhist-centre/>

Known in Ireland as the Dublin Meditation Centre. Ex- members have raised serious issues around the issue of gender confusion resulting from the views of the founder. They attempt to teach Buddhism in secondary schools. They are trying to recruit at universities and are going to open a centre on "Monto," now called Joyce St where Frank Duff (the founder of the Legion of Mary) worked which will cost about €500,000 according to

their web site. Received some requests for support this from family members who were concerned about how they deal with relationships.

7. School of Philosophy and Economic Science:

- <http://www.dialogueireland.org/dicontent/a2z/ses/index.html>

They are teaching non-dualistic philosophy and are running a number of courses, which are offering meditation based on the teaching of TM. They are also initiating people who are active Christians into Hinduism through very well run courses in nearly every major town in Ireland. They advertise parenting courses and Philosophy with high cost adverts in national newspapers. The result of this is that these newspapers hardly ever allow critical comment on the School. They run Townley Hall near Drogheda.

8. Tony Quinn:

- <http://www.dialogueireland.org/dicontent/a2z/tonyquinn/index.html>
- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/category/tony-quinn/>
- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/2009/01/18/the-tony-quinn-story-%E2%80%9Cfrom-butcher-to-oil-slick%E2%80%9D/>

Tony Quinn continues to be the source of many calls to Dialogue Ireland. There is a lot of activity in regard to challenging Quinn legally but little engagement on our site by former members. The Director received two

demands for private data associated with Quinn to be furnished to him. We published everything we had on our site and thereby neutralised his attempts to reveal our confidential sources which were not subject to this demand for information.

9. Unification Church:

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/category/unification-church/>

Otherwise known as the Moonies or nowadays as the **Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace**. Little to report, but still attempting to influence the course of events. They have managed to involve themselves in Ecumenical contacts and certain Catholic Centres like the Lantern Centre run by the Christian brothers, who have been quite naïve in their response to this. They currently are recruiting outside the GPO.

10. Tabor Institute Tallaght

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/category/tabor-institute/>

This group is an excellent example of the success of our internet strategy. A person concerned about Tabor contacted us back in May 2010. We began a dialogue process which led to us posting an article on this group. This led in September of that year to an article in the Sunday Times. This in turn led to a number of former students receiving support by using our site. The general feeling is that the group has been neutralised. In 2011 they attempted to threaten us legally, unsuccessfully, demanding damages and a retraction of our articles about them.

11. Atheist Ireland

- <http://www.atheist.ie/>

DI's positioning itself as concerned with "Cultism," rather than being a Christian apologetics organisation means we have been embraced by both Atheists and Sceptics. The Director has ongoing contact with this group through Mike Nugent. He has spoken in Dublin and in Cork and to the Sceptics at NUI Galway.

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/about/>

*So DI Ireland will work with those from creeds like Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam or Buddhism which reject cultist tendencies. Also we are happy to cooperate with those who reject religion – sceptics, agnostics and atheists who share a common view of cultism. Freedom of the mind is our common platform for cooperation and the defence of Human Rights. We do not see this work as an opportunity to promote a particular faith position.

12. ICROSS

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/category/charity-icross/>

During 2010 we assisted those trying to raise awareness concerning Mike Meegan and Icross. We were presented with evidence that Mr. Meegan had misrepresented his qualifications, as well as receiving allegations concerning inappropriate sexual relations between Mr. Meegan and young

men. We received information from a young man in London who was approached by Mr. Meegan.

We were immediately threatened with a legal claim when we reposted articles on this topic. Later the Irish Mail took him to court to undo a gagging order that had prevented them from publishing this story - all the relevant court files are hosted on our site.

13. Catholic Developments

We are very pleased that Anne Codd working with the Episcopal Conference is now acting as a bridge to bring our expertise to bear on Catholic Ireland. Hopefully this contact can result in better communication. We can but repeat that there still seems to be unwillingness for the Catholic Church to cooperate with organisations which have a concern for the common good. We would value dialogue with Diocesan offices in regard working together on these issues.

With the exception of the Tuam Archdiocese, the most basic level of communication is often lacking in regard to seeking to assist persons who are seeking help. Mail is not answered and instead of being partners we face a wall of silence. It would seem that until a new area of renewal comes about we will continue to repeat endlessly the same patterns. Our funding from the Catholic Church ceased in June of 2011, and the comments made this year are as relevant as those made last year.

13a. Palma Da Troya:

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/category/palmarian-church/>
-

Dialogue Ireland continues to receive calls from people about this group. Terrible issues of control and fear of losing contact with family members. There is a parish in Clontarf.

This group is experiencing great tension as older members have introduced a dress code and younger people are totally ostracised. The Church in Spain claims to be the true Church.

TV3 had a documentary which interspersed commentary on three groups in its programme, including this one:

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/2011/09/27/tv3-irelands-secret-cults/>
-

13b. The Magnificat Meal Movement, (MMM.)

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/category/magnificat-meal-movement/>
-

Though this movement is virtually non-existent in Ireland, it has left a lot of people wounded and disaffected from the Catholic Church. Also there are a number of families who have lost members to this group in Australia. Debra Geileskey, their leader, faced tax charges in Australia and is decidedly off-shore currently. The Director of Dialogue Ireland was approached by a number of people with significant new information about the MMM over the past year. We had had very little communication from Australia for some time.

13c. The House of Prayer:

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/category/house-of-prayer/>

The Director helped a number of ex members and family members of current members. Here it is case of an older generation who are not computer savvy, and who therefore can't believe what the younger generation is telling them. They are persuaded that newspapers like the Sunday World are lying about Christina even when Jim Gallagher has shown the documented proof of her wrong doing. He published a book called "Immaculate Deception", which made a confusing story clear. The Catholic Church can't control what is happening in the House of Prayer, but the scandal of the continued presence of Fr Gerard McGinnity there is bringing the Church into disrepute. TV3 had a documentary that featured the Director of Dialogue Ireland which interspersed commentary on three groups in its programme:

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/2011/09/27/tv3-irelands-secret-cults/>

13d. The Legionaries of Christ:

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/category/legionaries-of-christ/>

How this order has not been closed down defies logic. The leadership needs to be investigated for protecting the founder and covering up his crimes. Those with a genuine vocation should be offered new life as secular clergy or go through the normal processes for joining another religious order. Their presence in Ireland has lost any rationale.

14. The Faith/Prosperity Movement, Abundant Life Dublin and Galway:

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/category/faith-movement-abundant-life/>

In 2011 this grouping raised serious issues about finance and the abuse of members. Since late 2011 Victory in Dublin has taken over this Church. We are providing support to ex members, and non-believing spouses, and family members. In some cases we have connections with types of groupings going back at least 15 years. This group is very active in assisting the director with publishing information on this issue.

15. The Modern Mystery School

- <http://dialogueireland.wordpress.com/category/the-modern-mystery-school/>

Again we were approached by a concerned relative and we were able to raise the profile of this group by using our internet strategy.

Conferences and international organisation meetings attended

FECRIS

- <http://www.fecris.org/>
-

FECRIS is a Europe-wide body which monitors Sects, and NRMs. DI is now an associate member of this body. This year's Conference was held in Warsaw and the Director of Dialogue Ireland attended.

Schools/ Colleges/ Groups/ Lectures 2011

Due to the specialist nature of our presentation and the time it involves, we are now only responding to invitations. Numbers were down on 2010 as the cuts in education took effect and the tradition of having outside speakers is under threat.

Finances

Dialogue Ireland has very little income and we have a small number of donations which reach €250. 2011 was the first year since the Trust was formed when we made a claim from Revenue. We received a small number of donations via Pay Pal. Also funding from the Catholic Bishops was terminated in this year after 15 years. We also received some funding from other Religious Orders, but generally the climate is very poor in regard to obtaining funds. At the end of the year we had less than €10,000 in our account. A focus on fundraising has been established with the view to giving a free service but raising the cost of the service with those using it. School visits also produced a small income.

Mike Garde
Director
April 10, 2012

Disclaimer and notices

While every effort has been made to ensure the information contained within this report is accurate, Dialogue Ireland cannot accept any liability for errors and/or omissions and presents the material in this report for informational purposes only as part of its mission.

This report was prepared using the following software: Microsoft Word, PDF Creator, Gnu Image Manipulation Program, Mozilla Firefox, Opera Web Browser.

Dialogue Ireland wishes to thank all of the people who have contributed, whether through donations or the exchange of information, to its work over the year 2011. Your kind assistance is appreciated and was invaluable to making this report possible.