



# NIMMA NEWS

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## E-Mail

If you would like to receive an e-mailed version of NIMMA News, please let us know at: [nimma@nireland.com](mailto:nimma@nireland.com) or ring our Belfast office on 02890 235444

# NIMMA News goes e-mail only

**NIMMA News will no longer be published in 'hard' copy after this edition.**

Three years after it was launched to help raise public awareness of the Association, the newsletter will transfer to e-mail only subscribers from the December issue.

"There are two main reasons why we have taken this decision to print only online", said NIMMA Chair Ken Dunn.

"Budgetary constraints, and what charity isn't suffering from those these days, mean that printing and postage costs are prohibitive, but we also feel that, from an environmental point of view, we should be seen to be doing our bit to cut down on paper wastage.

"In some ways, we are the victims of our own success. We got NIMMA News up and running, made sure it was distributed as often and as widely as possible and supported fully financially, but its production has become a major drain on our limited funds.

"Thankfully, we can make use of the technology available to ensure that as many of regular readers as possible get the chance to remain as e-mail subscribers.

"The e-mail format allows us to use better pictures, graphics and full colour production that had become impossible to fund



in recent months, as well as virtually unlimited distribution.

"We have been advertising the e-mail version of the newsletter for nearly two years and already have a comprehensive e-mailing list that covers the whole of the island of Ireland, but we fully expect its take up to increase dramatically.

"Anyone currently on the postal mailing list for NIMMA News, should contact our Belfast office to arrange to be included for future editions."



NIMMA Chair Ken Dunn spoke at the Clonard/Fitzroy Fellowship and is pictured with Fr Gerry Reynolds and Reverend Steve Stockman.

## History of mixed marriage for cross-community group

NIMMA Chair Ken Dunn highlighted the history of mixed marriage in Ireland when he spoke to the monthly meeting of the Clonard Fitzroy fellowship in Belfast.

Ken's talk, which details the rollercoaster background to MM from as far back as the 13th Century, was particularly relevant to the group where several mixed couples spoke of their own experiences. The Clonard Fitzroy Fellowship was established in 1981 between the Redemptorist monastery in West Belfast and the Presbyterian church in the South of the city.

It aims to promote mutual understanding, respect and a common witness between people from various Christian traditions in Northern Ireland through programmes, friendships and activities.

# 'He taught us the power of love'

An obituary of Canon Dick McDonald,  
who died 30th May 2011 aged 94



**W**e in NIMMA first met Dick and Dorothy McDonald at Corrymeela on a snowy weekend in January 1974. They were part of a team brought together by the Revs Ray Davey and Harold Good. The weekend was for those in, or those hoping to be in, a mixed marriage. When some of us showed a desire to meet again and further our aims, it was Dick and Dorothy who organised the meeting in Belfast which produced NIMMA.

Looking back, I can see their quiet technique – we were informed and encouraged to be self-sufficient as an organisation, but always knowing that we could call on them for assistance as needed. Before the first meeting, they had decided who would be Chair, Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, yet we thought we had made the decision! For our formative years, Dick and Dorothy attended our weekend conferences and guided members towards marriage and decisions about the upbringing of children. When the association was clearly self-sufficient under the

further guiding hands of Canon Edgar Turner and the Rev David Turtle, Dick and Dorothy took a back seat as they pursued other objectives.

In recent years, after the death of Dorothy, Dick became a regular at the NIMMA barbeques and there enjoyed getting to know a new generation of members. His last meeting with NIMMA was in August 2010 at a farewell party for our Chaplain, Fr Tom Layden SJ. It was at that party that, for the first time, Dick admitted to me that he was getting old!

Dick lived a life of faith, hope and love. He wanted us all to have the same wonderful 60-year marriage as he and Dorothy. He taught us the power of love and how it could overcome the objections of both Church and society. We have lost a dear friend.

*Ken Dunn*

## NIMMA backs Bill of Rights, but highlights flaws

**C**ampaigns' Assistant Lynda Sullivan from the Human Rights Consortium, which campaigns for a strong and inclusive Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, heard how NIMMA has already made it clear that it does not support the consultative document that is supposed to signpost a shared future for Northern Ireland during a visit to our Belfast office.

Chair Ken Dunn said that, while NIMMA was an ardent supporter of a Bill of Rights for the Province, even modest progress will not be adequately realised in the absence of timescales, ongoing monitoring arrangements and financial affordability.

He said: "The Cohesion, Sharing and Integration document has serious flaws and, while it provides some worthy aspirations and is well-intentioned, it lacks the real ambition required to move out of existing stalemate and into true integration and reconciliation.

The Human Rights Consortium was established in 2000 to encourage widespread community participation in the Bill of Rights consultation.

It works to promote awareness of and participation in the Bill of Rights process and debate and aims to mobilise widespread popular and political support behind a strong and inclusive Bill of Rights.



**Ken Dunn pictured with Human Rights Consortium Campaigns' Assistant Lynda Sullivan.**

# Mixed marriage book set for publication



**NIMMA's paperback on the real story of mixed marriage in Northern Ireland was nearing completion as NIMMA News went to press.**

Eighteen people from across the Province have told their stories in a book which has the working title "Mixed Emotions".

NIMMA Chair Ken Dunn said: "We were very fortunate to have volunteers whose stories will go a long way to representing those thousands of men and women on this island who have put love before tribal allegiance. We are at the printing stage at the moment and look forward to launching the book in the near future".

The book, which is being funded by The Big Lottery Fund, will give mixed marriage people the chance to tell their stories – in their own words.

Ken says, "It is a project that represents what NIMMA is all about.

We know already of the tremendous demand for information about both the logistics of mixed marriage and the actual experience itself from prospective couples, the press, the churches and community groups.

That demand that has not been met fully – yet – and these individual stories, these real life experiences, will certainly complement the facts and



support that we already provide.

By definition, any mixed marriage scenario is totally cross-community and we have chosen as broad as possible a cross-section of contributors for the final publication to, hopefully, get a true picture of the mixed marriage experience in the Province.

This has always been about bringing together couples to share their experiences of putting love first and about showing how their example can make a real difference to so many in our community, particularly our young people.

It is about increasing awareness, promoting inclusiveness and heightening self confidence and we recognise that all of the people concerned have shown real courage to share their stories.

I look forward to the day when this book is regarded as standard reading for young people at all of our schools".

## Membership



**Interested in joining or  
rejoining NIMMA?  
Simply ring us on Belfast  
90 235 444 or e-mail  
nimma@nireland.com**

# A Champion for Mixed Marriage

Dr Garrett Fitzgerald - 1926 - 2011

**M**ore than 50 years ago Garrett Fitzgerald had a vision of a pluralist and tolerant Republic of Ireland with good neighbourly relationships with Northern Ireland and Great Britain. He spent the rest of his life attempting to follow this through with his extraordinary energy and enthusiasm.

One rarely mentioned by the news media was his enthusiasm for mixed marriage. Coming from an inter-church family, he was very aware of the possible, positive outcomes. He considered that there could be no true reconciliation without the ultimate reconciliation of inter-marriage. In 1960, he asked the Irish Roman Catholic hierarchy to petition Rome that Ireland be excluded from the full rigours of Ne Temere. They refused to consider such a request. Undeterred, while in Rome as Foreign Minister with Taoiseach Liam Cosgrove for a 1977 EU meeting, he secretly visited the Vatican for a meeting with Pope Paul VI. Dr Fitzgerald had, without telling anyone in Government, submitted four requests to the Pope. The Vatican would encourage pluralism in both the Republic and Northern Ireland by;

1. Not opposing the sale of condoms
  2. Allowing divorce legislation to be introduced in the Republic
  3. Integrated education would be supported especially in Northern Ireland and
  4. The Pope would relax the opposition to mixed marriage in both the Republic, where the mixed marriage regulations meant that the Protestant population was in decline, and in Northern Ireland where mixed marriage remained a very serious obstacle to improving community relations.
- Pope Paul read out a prepared statement refusing all four requests.

Dr Fitzgerald supported the Dublin-based Association of Interchurch Families and spoke at their 21st anniversary dinner. He also gave the opening address at the Bellinter International Conference on Mixed Marriage in 1994 and found time to stay for lunch. When I explained to the conference the NIMMA understanding of baptism, he told me this was the first time he had properly understood baptism. We then spent an entertaining coffee break exchanging stories about senior clergy. While his interest in mixed marriage was largely ignored by the media I am sure future historians will not be so remiss.

KD



## BOUQUETS

Dear Paul,

I'm getting back to you after a few months. I promised I would write!

Roberto and I are getting married on September 3rd in my hometown, Aix en Provence, France.

We have met a priest who has agreed to marry us in a ceremony opened to all believers. I have asked a friend of mine to speak after the homily. The ceremony will be bilingual (Italian and French) and we will sing in English as well. Our marriage will be recognized by the Italian Catholic church as my fiancé wished. We have followed a pre-marriage course with both the Catholic church and mine.

We remain strongly attached to Northern Ireland and hopefully we will enjoy our honeymoon there!

Thanks very much for your kind attention and all the best for your work at NIMMA.

Best regards

*Muriel.*

Dear Paul

Thank you so much of your booklet. It was extremely helpful and will help us with our decisions for the future.

*Alice from Dun Laoghaire.*

Dear Paul

Many thanks for your prompt phone call and for sending the copy of NIMMA book. The book's contents are very informative and comprehensive, so should be of great help. With all good wishes.

*Maureen, Ballycastle.*



### Northern Ireland Mixed Marriage Association

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