

MCCABES NEWS AN OVERVIEW OF 2008 IN IRELAND



This is the long version of our 2008 overview - so hopefully you're sitting in a comfy chair with a cup of tea at hand (or coffee if that's your non-Irish preference) ... we trust you will enjoy catching up with us and much as we have enjoyed reviewing God's incredible blessings!

What an incredible year! So many things we felt God wanting us to do in Deaf Ministry since the beginning of our mission's time, have either started or will be starting within the next number of months. We also had a year of many wonderful guests – each a blessing in their own special way. What a privilege to partner with these various ambassadors of Christ Jesus. It also proved to be a challenging year - but God proved faithful time and time again to us and those we are here to serve – no surprise in that! Thank YOU for partnering with us – allowing us to stay where God would have us minister. We know it couldn't happen without Him – and without you!

The Lynch Family

Many of you were prayer partners with us a year ago for Karl, Brian and Deirdre Lynch's special needs son, who was very ill for many weeks – but eventually pulled through. Almost a year later, Karl, once again became seriously ill, this time with pneumonia which then led to a pseudo obstruction of the bowel. Karl, nearly 20 years of age, fought bravely for six excruciating weeks while in hospital. Surgery was not possible due to his fragile and deformed body. Deirdre did not leave her son's side for the entire six weeks. Debra was up-and-down to Dublin on a daily basis to interpret for the doctor visits and offer encouragement and 'just be Jesus with skin-on'. The St. Mark's Church (Assembly of God) family were wonderful with their visits, meals for the family, and unceasing prayer. The last 4 weeks of Karl's life he was on a morphine drip and a drip for anti-sickness medication – neither was very successful. Throughout Karl's life, he never walked or talked with his voice or signed with his hands – but his eyes and smiles were his wonderful tools of communication. Karl smiled his last smile at his Mom, Dad, brothers Barry and Shane, and sister Michelle on Wednesday night, 30th April, and then went home to be with Jesus at 6.30 am Thursday, 1st May. The funeral was put on hold for a further week – for two reasons: Barry would be taking his university accounting final exams over the next few days, and Debra would not be able to interpret the funeral as she would be out of the country from the 1st-4th May attending the Northern Europe Retreat in Holland.

Over Karl's hospital bed, we met the newly appointed Catholic Chaplain for the Deaf, Fr. Gerard Tyrrell. Praise the Lord for Fr. Gerard, a priest with a deep and personal love for Jesus. We had a number of opportunities over the six weeks to share what we felt Christ was asking us to do – and praise God these are things near and dear to Fr. Gerard's heart as well (Bible translation, bible stories, etc).

Thursday night's visitation for Karl was held in the Sunshine Home – Karl's home from the time he was 2 months old – due to his severe special needs. Over 150 Deaf people came to his viewing – a wonderful show of support and love for the Lynch family. St. Mark's pastor, Sean Mullarkey, and Fr. Gerard did a special service together – it was beautiful with spontaneous prayers from hearing and deaf people. The funeral was a celebration of his life, with a moving tribute by Fr. Derek, the Chaplain in St. John of God's school where Karl had attended for the last 6 years of his life. They had a special bond, and the eulogy was beautiful. At the end of the funeral, a powerpoint presentation of Karl's life was shown – there wasn't a dry eye in the church. Since his eyes were his means of communication, we started and ended the presentation focused on his eyes – from small child to the young man he was when he went Home to be with Jesus.

Deirdre has really struggled with his death, even though she's known since he was a baby that his life expectancy would probably never see 21 years. Brian, his father, and Karl's siblings are also struggling in their own ways. In September this precious family suffered another loss – Deirdre's beloved father was diagnosed with cancer and died a few weeks later. This sad loss, and that of her son's death, has driven her into a deep, spiralling depression coupled with overwhelming grief. *Please keep this precious family in prayer – as and when the Lord directs you. Please keep us in prayer as we minister daily to them.*

Chronological Bible Story-Telling (CBST)

While Debra was commuting up and down to Dublin, Michael was hard at work developing his skills with Chronological Bible Story-Telling and learning how to film and edit those stories. All we can say is - Wow! This tool has been used by an organization called DOOR for a number of years around the world. It's one of the best ways of teaching bible stories to Deaf people that we have ever come across. Powerful! How does it work? Studying the written Word of God, story-boarding the text (i.e. drawing stick pictures, symbols, etc.), then signing from the story-board until what is signed and what was written in Scripture are the same (not the word order – but the content). After signing the story to Deaf people, they are asked questions (who, what, when, where, why, how) to make sure the story is fully understood. If they respond with something 'odd' – you know you have to go back and explain it again, or sign it differently to make it clearer. We started with the story of 'Creation'. One of our deaf people, a highly educated researcher, author, and Christian for over 35 years, realised for the first time that there were two trees in the Garden of Eden – not one! And when Michael 'told' the story of Cain and Abel – how sin is like a lion just waiting to pounce – it was so clear to the Deaf that they are a target for it – this was *news* to many of them.

Wycliffe Translator

Thank you for praying about Wycliffe coming to help us translate the Word of God. Our translator, who needs to remain anonymous, came in March and stayed with us for three months doing the background research to make a 'case' for a translation project to happen in the Republic of Ireland. One of the key things that needed to happen – the Catholic Church, Church of Ireland, and Assemblies of God – these three 'organizations' needed to agree to work together on the translation project. Success! Our translator left in June, reported to their supervisors, and has now returned to begin learning the grammar of Irish Sign Language. The projected start date to translate The Gospel of Luke is in the spring of 2009. *Please pray that our translator will learn ISL quickly, integrate smoothly into the Irish Deaf Community, and will be able to handle the delicate political balance within the Deaf Community with Divine wisdom and grace. And praise God with us for this incredible answer to prayer – the start of translating the written Word of God into a visual Word of God through Irish Sign Language!*

Rev. Lloyd & Monika Couch

Ministers to the Deaf Community in the Illinois District



It's amazing how God brings people into our lives at just the right time. The Couches came to interpret at the Mission's Retreat we attended in Holland during the first 4 days of May. What a fabulous time of fellowship with other missionary families, our terrific area directors, Tim & Marketa Southerland, and gifted Europe directors, Greg & Sandie Mundis. Lloyd and Monika Couch arrived in Ireland and immediately blessed our lives, the lives of the deaf and the hearing – with their Scripture-based teaching and ministry. They also did hospital visitation with us – leading a woman to Christ in the corridor of the hospital when visiting Karl and family! Rev. Couch even put together the powerpoint presentation for Karl's funeral! What a tremendous asset to the Kingdom of God these wonderful saints are! We would like to thank Tim for organising the Couch's to interpret at the retreat making it possible for both of us to enjoy the weekend with total inclusion; for the gracious Illinois District providing the finances needed to get them here; and last but not least, to BGMG for their gift in making it possible for these unique ministers to be with us in Holland and Ireland - interpreting and teaching young and old, deaf and hearing – that Jesus is our everything. *Please pray for continued strength and health for the Couch's.*

Alpha International

We were invited by Alpha Ireland to attend the world Alpha International conference held at Holy Trinity Brompton in London toward the end of May. Debra went to represent us. What a life-changing experience! The worship and teachings were incredible! While there she met with the media team and shared how much Alpha had touched the lives of the Deaf last year when it was presented in ISL in St. Mark's. We were thrilled to get permission from Alpha International to translate the Alpha course onto DVD with the interpreter in a 'bubble'. We are now looking for funding to make the project happen. We need about \$15,000 for this translation project (filming, editing, back translation work). *Please pray that the monies will come in so we may begin filming the first week of January 2009.* Alpha Ireland is also working on the Irish introductory portion of the Alpha series which will also need to be interpreted.

We will be meeting with Paddy Monaghan, the director of Alpha Ireland, and Fr. Gerard Tyrrell, the Catholic Chaplain for the Deaf, this week to see how we can get the Alpha Course into the Catholic Deaf Community. *Please be praying that we'll see this tool of evangelism touching the lives of the wider Irish Deaf Community – and that lives will be changed by finding a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.*

Ann & Blake Mayes from the Minnesota District

As our Wycliffe translator and the Couch's flew back to the States, we collected our next ministry team: special friends from Minnesota, Ann Mayes, and her 15-year old son, Blake. Ann is hard of hearing/deaf and has a heart-burden to reach the Deaf of Ireland with the message that there is "Victory Over Darkness – New Life in Christ." Using the teaching materials from Dr. Neil Anderson's book, and her own life's testimony, Ann did a day workshop for us with the Deaf people who attend St. Mark's. Ann later had an opportunity do some further ministry with Brian & Deirdre Lynch in their home. *Pray that the truths Ann shared with our Deaf people will take root and not be snatched away.*

While Ann was in Dublin doing workshops for us, Blake was in Bailieborough (our town) working with four young people – training them as the youth leaders for a planned outreach to the children in Zachery’s school, the Church of Ireland Model School. The school has 84 children – and 42 of the children came to a week-long after school Fun & Bible Week. Blake was a-ma-zing! He taught the teen helpers how to do puppet ministry and how to do Stix (if you’re not familiar with it, check out their website). Blake and the teen helpers were brilliant. The children had a super time learning about Jesus – and are keen for the next one that will take place next June. One little girl, Megan, accepted Jesus into her heart at the end of the week.



During the Fun & Bible Week, I noticed one of the teen helpers getting more and more withdrawn. On Thursday morning, I rang Zoe and asked her what was wrong. As it turned out, one of the 6th class (grade) lads had been slyly calling her names – and not very nice names at that – but even worse was that this had been going on the past few years while she was still attending primary school and in their Sunday school classroom. Each of the adults helping during the week had warned this lad that his general behaviour was disruptive and his language inappropriate – and we gave him several warnings and told him what the consequences would be. After speaking with the other adult leaders and praying together, it was decided I would contact the parent on the permission slip to let them know their son would not be allowed to return for the last two days. What a tough decision – but as it turned out – God had already been preparing the way for what was to come. I spoke with Zoe’s mother before ringing the lad’s father and asked if she or her husband had ever talked with the father about the situation. When she told me ‘no, they hadn’t’, I asked permission to let him know that this situation had been going on for quite some time. She agreed – with some trepidation. John (the Dad) was shocked to learn that this was happening to a friend’s daughter and had been happening without anyone telling him. The end of the story - John had his son apologize to Zoe, he was disciplined, John spoke with Zoe’s parents, reconciliation happened between the parents, Zoe now feels that her parents will listen to her and protect her, and her parents have learned that confrontation when done in love is a powerful tool from the Lord. What an outcome for the Kingdom! *Please pray for our next Kid’s outreach that will take place the last week of the school term in June 2009 – and for the Team that will possibly come from somewhere in the States.*

Gary and Suzanne Timms, Australian Friends



What a blessing Australian friends, Gary & Suzanne Timms were this summer. Although they were only with us for a few days, the time they spent was uplifting. Michael brought them to a barbecue at the Meath Deaf Association and at the end of the day they had taken the opportunity to share with four people and to pray with three who are genuinely seeking a relationship with God. To have people come from outside our Irish culture and share Jesus with the Deaf Community – it’s so soul satisfying.

Michael's Summer in the Midwest

Michael spent the summer months in the States, first by attending the National Deaf Fellowship Conference in Tulsa, OK and then staying with Rev. Lloyd and Monika Couch. Heartfelt thanks to the Couch's for their wonderful hospitality, patient mentoring, and their daily example of living like Jesus would have us live. One more thing – thanks Monika for getting Michael to the hospital in time. The day after Michael arrived he was helping to tidy the garden when he got a bee sting – that almost cost him his life. Monika raced him to the hospital where a medical team were on hand to rush him into emergency - Room 7. The team of doctors worked for 15 minutes to stabilise him. Monika was told a few more minutes and they wouldn't have been able to save him. Thank you, Lord, for Your hand of protection, for Monika's quick action, and for you who faithfully pray for us – even when you don't know what to pray specifically. More thanks ... to Pastor Marva Petrus, Oak Brook Deaf Church, IL, for the lift to and from OK, and the times Michael was allowed to minister at OBDC; the various pastors and friends who allowed Michael to minister or visit with them while in the States; to Rob & Ann Mayes and Steve & Lori Lahodny for their gracious Minnesota hospitality. It was also great to see Debra's mother, Maxine, and the Schoenberger family on a brief visit to Minnesota.

Cork, Ireland

Recently we were contacted by two Christian women from Cork (the very south of Ireland) – a mother and her mother-in-law. Kristy and her husband pastor an Evangelical church in Cork – and their 9 year-old daughter was born deaf. Rosemary and her husband are retired Baptist ministers. The families have learned Irish Sign Language to be able to communicate with Kelly. This is very rare – as less than ½ of 1% of hearing parents learn sign language to communicate with their deaf children! They recently learned about our ministry and contacted us so we could meet in Dublin - we did - for four hours of non-stop chat! They have a heart and passion to start a Deaf ministry for children in the Cork area and were so excited about CBST. In January, we are starting a Sunday school class for our Deaf adults in St. Mark's (this is something new here in Ireland), and we'll be using CBST as our 'curriculum'. When we are confident the story is clearly understood, we'll tape it and send it on to be used with the deaf children in Cork. *Please pray that we'll clearly relate the Word of God through this way, helping Deaf people to access Bible stories through sign language!*

Martine Curtis, Interpreter

Martine, a friend of ours for years, has recently graduated from the Centre for Deaf Studies, TCD, with her diploma in ISL/English Interpreting. Praise God! (Our first 'date' was at Martine & Pat's wedding in St. Mark's.) *Pray for Martine and her family as she develops and grows as an interpreter and as her testimony for Christ Jesus shines within the Deaf Community.*

County Meath – Our Next Adventure?



With Martine's skills as an interpreter growing, and JC, another girl in St. Mark's excelling at signing worship - we are excited to see what God wants to unfold for Deaf Ministry. Michael leads a bible study each Thursday night in St. Mark's – this is like our 'home-group' within the St. Mark's family – and is also attended by Deaf people who cannot make it on a Sunday. But – we sense the Lord may be leading us outside of Dublin and into Navan, County Meath. Michael is a committee member of the Meath Deaf Association and has been instrumental in bringing

some 'positive attitudes' to the group – letting his Light shine. When the Lord led us to move home outside of Dublin two years ago, we did so in obedience to His leading, but not really 'knowing' the why's of the move. We 'felt' we were to reach out to the Deaf Communities in the northeast counties of Ireland – and we have been doing that in various ways.

Because of the shortage of sign language interpreters in the northeast counties, Debra has been volunteering in different settings (educational, interviews, legal, funerals, weddings and christenings, etc.). This summer alone she was asked to interpret four funerals – all were for hearing fathers in their 60's – three funerals were Catholic and one was Church of Ireland. These were opportunities to share the real meaning of Scriptures and songs that were used in the mass/service, and some of these conversations have had further contact. Please keep these families in prayer – and that more opportunities will arise to share the true meaning of God's Word within their lives.

Northeast Women's Group

At the encouragement of the Meath Deaf Association, and especially Michael's urging, Debra and signing friend, Ann Bird, organized a Ladies Day in the Navan Deaf Club for Deaf women who live in the northeast counties. Twenty women came to be pampered and spoiled on Saturday, 15th November. Our theme was 'You Are Special'! When the ladies arrived and registered, they were escorted to the pampering room where they received a hand massage using the Mary Kay birthday gift Ann Mayes had brought during the summer. The three ladies giving the hand pampering treatment prayed for each



of the women as their hands were being massaged. Two of these volunteers don't know sign language (yet), but felt privileged to be invited to be a part of the day – and have already offered to help at our next event. One woman attends the Elam Pentecostal Church that is located just 100 yards from the Deaf club. A number of weeks ago this church felt convicted that they have not been reaching out to the Deaf Community and started praying – never realizing how God was going to answer – and so quickly. We decorated the room for Christmas; beautiful tree, lights, four beautifully appointed table settings, a delicious brunch, then on to crafts (painting a clay flower pot, making the greenery ring with candle, and learning how to make their own holiday napkin rings.

The ladies returned to the dining area where they had tea/coffee and muffins, and I gave a short devotional on how special we are to the Father – and the proof is in Jesus. We had a few gift items to give away at the end – and God even worked out that each table would have a 'winner'. The outcome of the day – love was shared and received, the women themselves asked if we would organise more of these 'event's, God was honoured, and a women's ministry was birthed. We shared with St. Mark's about our outreach and they want to financially support it. Ann shared what happened at her church, a recently planted Assemblies of God church in Navan, and they want to know how they can support this ministry, financially and other ways. Nine members of Ann's church want to learn Irish Sign Language – Michael and another Deaf man will start teaching ISL in January 2009. The Elim Church wants to get involved in whatever way they can – and 4 people there want to learn ISL. Our next Ladies Day will be January 24th - and the theme, 'The Real Meaning of Love is ...' We can hardly wait to see what God does with this new beginning. We will be meeting with the Assemblies of God pastors Jamie & Ludmila Corcorran (he is Irish, she is Brazilian) in the New Year to talk about Deaf Ministry in Navan. *Please pray as the Lord directs you.*

Zachery

Zac played in a clog in Holland



Our news would not be complete without a bit about our son. Zac is in 3rd grade, enjoys gymnastics and football (soccer) and loves his cats – yes, cats! Puss-in-Socks (mommy, was a stray but is now family), Chester (he’s an 8 month old ginger cat, is named for Zac’s favourite football team, Manchester United, and weighs a *stone* which translates into 14 pounds, he’s almost twice as big as his mommy, Puss), and the most recent member is Cinders (she’s 3 months old, looks like her mommy, Puss, and is a bundle of sweet and playful kitty). Zac’s best friend is, Cormac, a neighbour lad who is one week older than him. Although Cormac’s family are Catholic, he is allowed to come to church with us on an occasional Sunday, and goes with Zac to the

the Friday night bible club held in the home of a couple who are with Faith Mission (a U.K. based ministry). Zac loves to be the first to recite his memory verse at the club. Our favourite night time reading is The Jesus Storybook Bible – it’s awesome. During the summer, Zachery and Mom helped at four Fun & Bible Weeks, and Zac attended the St. Mark’s Kid’s Camp while Mom taught one of the older bible classes. In school, Zachery’s doing well with Irish (Gaelic) and has a great accent – although he takes some slugging (teasing) from classmates because to them he still *sounds* American. We just discovered how fluent Zachery is with ISL when he asked to translate Michael’s prayer at Thanksgiving for the 13 American guests we had invited to join us - young people with Master’s Commission, a couple in ministry with Upward – a sports outreach to inner city youth, AG missionaries from Alabama, our Wycliffe translator, and another couple who live in Ireland and attend St. Mark’s. Zachery enjoyed having a house full of guests – all who enjoyed playing games as much as he does! Zac joins us in wishing you all a very Merry Christmas! *Please keep Zachery in your prayers.*

2009 – Hopeful Plans That Need Your Prayers

- ♥ The 1st week of March, North Central University’s Centre for Deaf Studies, will be coming on a mission’s trip.
- ♥ A hearing Deaf ministry intern will be coming to work with Michael during the summer, while Debra & Zachery visit supporting churches.
- ♥ We would like to attend the 3rd World Deaf Assemblies of God Conference being held in Japan next October - and bring Deaf people from St. Mark’s. We believe by attending the Conference, Irish Deaf people will see testimonies from around the globe that will give them the opportunity to deepen their own commitment to Christ and want to be a part of the Great Commission within Ireland, Europe, and beyond.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

Thank you most sincerely for your faithfulness in praying for us and for the financial support crucial to keep us here. Our prayer is that you will know how high, how wide, and how deep the Father's Love is for you and yours – a Love demonstrated by the gift of His Son, Jesus!

His Hands Extended,

Michael, Debra & Zachery McCabe
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http://ag.org/contributorservices_PDF/CRCDAUTH.pdf

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