

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Comber Cubs clean up**



April 12, 2024

## Image of the day



## Comber Cubs clean up

**It was another fantastic Big Spring Clean with Comber Regeneration Community Partnership - CRCP**

45 volunteers came out in force including including 1st Comber Beavers and Cubs

45 bags of litter collected and Easter eggs provided for all young volunteers by Comber Commerce group.

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Huge thanks to all who participated, taking pride in their local community in Ards and North Down Borough Council

Find out how you can get involved in the Big Spring Clean 2024;

<https://www.liveherelovehere.org/bigspringclean>

Supporting the initiative were the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Housing Executive and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful.

## News

For his public and community service, and offer heartfelt congratulations on being recog

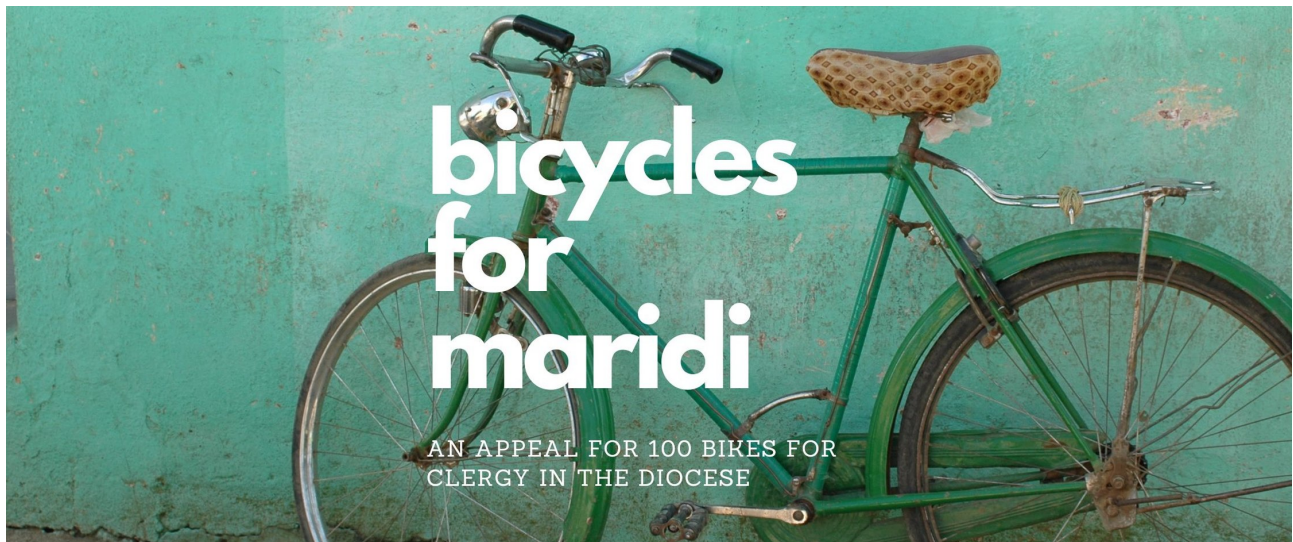
## Bicycles for Maridi

**Bishop David McClay of Down & Dromore has launched a diocesan appeal for 100 bicycles for clergy in Maridi Diocese, South Sudan.**

The diocese has 92 priests and 5 deacons plus lay readers, evangelists and Mothers' Union workers serving 75 parishes. These are scattered across a wide area, largely inaccessible by car, meaning that to reach their congregations clergy must walk long distances for many hours.

On his recent visit to Maridi, the bishop was able to meet, spend quality time, pray and worship with the faith filled clergy and lay people of the diocese. He said -





“The Diocese of Maridi has the same number of parishes as Down and Dromore but each parish will often have many worshipping communities with new ones being birthed continually as the diocese grows.

“Most of the clergy do not receive a stipend having to exist by growing their own crops and perhaps keeping a few chickens and goats. In this way they resource their ministries and provide for their families. I was impressed by the biblical literacy; prayer lives and the costly commitment of these wonderful clergy who lack any form of transport and carry out their ministerial duties on foot.

“Strong, suitable bicycles for pastors are urgently needed and can be purchased for £200 each. I am appealing to all parishes to help us reach our target of 100 bicycles.”

Please see post on the Down & Dromore diocesan web site for methods of making a donation.

[<https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2024/04/bicycles-for-maridi>]

## Derry and Raphoe trawl for members of a diocesan review commission

In a letter to members of Derry and Raphoe Diocesan Synod seek and encourage expressions of interest from individuals who would like to be considered to become members of a Commission being established to conduct a strategic review of their dioceses.



**SUMMER PRAISE**

**"FAVOURITE HYMNS OF THE CHURCH YEAR  
IN DERRYVULLEN NORTH"**

Congregational Singing

Groups

Solos

Choir

Duets

**SUNDAY 23RD JUNE 2024**  
**7.00PM IN DERRYVULLEN NORTH CHURCH, IRVINESTOWN**

A collection will be taken in aid of and divided equally between  
CMSI (Rev Andrew & Joanne Quill in S. Sudan) and Air Ambulance NI

The poster features a central image of a church with a large bouquet of flowers in front of it. The background is a gradient from yellow at the top to orange at the bottom. The text is in various colors and fonts, with the main title in large, bold, yellow letters with a black outline. The event details are in bold, yellow letters. The collection information is in black text at the bottom.

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At its last meeting in October 2023, Diocesan Synod resolved that such a Commission should be established to conduct a strategic review of our dioceses.

The letter states, “We are now seeking expressions of interest from individuals who would like to be considered to become members of the Commission.

“Diocesan Council has agreed that the Commission should consist of the Bishop, the two Archdeacons, and up to 9 other members”.

Further detail including information on the remit of the Commission is available at the following link: <https://www.derryandraphoe.org/diocesan-review-commission-expressions-of-interest/>

“To express an interest in being a member of the Commission, please email [bishopsoffice@derryandraphoe.org](mailto:bishopsoffice@derryandraphoe.org) including the words 'expression of interest' in the subject line and giving:

- a brief description of your role(s) held in parish & diocese.
- a brief outline of your special interests or areas of expertise.

Expressions of interest need to be received by 5pm on Friday 19th April. The signatories are -

The Rt Revd Andrew Forster - Bishop of Derry and Raphoe;  
The Ven Robert Miller - Archdeacon of Derry; The Ven David Huss - Archdeacon of Raphoe



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[\[https://www.derryandrathoe.org/diocesan-review-commission-expressions-of-interest/\]](https://www.derryandrathoe.org/diocesan-review-commission-expressions-of-interest/)



## **Bishops on radio on the current challenges for farmers**

**The Simply Divine Programme on South East Radio for Saturday last had a focus on farming.**

Leaders from farm organisations were interviewed - including Alice Doyle (Deputy

President of the IFA), Patrick Kent, (former president of Cattle and Sheep Farmers Association) and Denis Drennan (National President of the ICMSA).

The programme also had contributions from Bishop Adrian Wilkinson (Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory) and Bishop Ger Nash (Bishop of Ferns). The focus was the impact of the continued bad weather on the livelihoods, finance and mental health of farmers.

Bishop Adrian Wilkinson and Bishop Ger Nash offered support to the farming community and had composed

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prayers emphasising the needs of food producers and the rural economy at this challenging time.

As a mark of solidarity at 9.55 a.m. on the following day, Sunday 14th April Patricia McNally led The Lord's Prayer on South East Radio and people were invited to pause for a moment, and those who wished, to join her in prayer as people hoped for improved weather.

## **A PRAYER FOR FARMERS** **- written by Bishop Adrian Wilkinson**

Creator God, in the resources of the earth you have given us riches for all humanity. We pray for those involved in harvesting these resources, in agriculture and horticulture, forestry, mining and fisheries. Their work can be dangerous and for some beset with uncertainty through weather and disease.

We pray for all farmers at this time of prolonged rainfall when fields are still saturated, and growth is slow. Grant them the gift of patience and help them to trust in the natural rhythms of life. We pray for those tempted to despair in hard times, that they may be helped and supported by caring services and friends. We pray for wise financial planning, land care and asset management, so that farmers may be confident about the future of their farms and rural communities flourish. We give thanks for their dedication as they care for your creation and provide food for our needs and markets.

Creator God, this we ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



## **Moravian bishop installed as President of Irish Council of Churches**

**The 101st Annual Meeting of the Irish Council of Churches took place in Gracehill Moravian Church, Co. Antrim yesterday. The new President and Vice President were installed at the meeting.**

Bishop Sarah Groves was installed as the new ICC President. Bishop Groves serves as both Minister of Gracehill Moravian Church and as a Bishop in the Moravian Church. She has been ICC Vice–President since 2022. Speaking after her installation today, Bishop Groves shared: “As the Moravian Church was one of the founding members of ICC over 100 years ago, this is an exciting day. I look forward to my term as ICC President and to leading the organisation as we continue to equip Ireland’s churches to connect through a common belief in Christ.”

The Very Rev Dr Charles McMullen was also installed, as the incoming ICC Vice–President. Dr McMullen has been Minister of West Church, Bangor, in County Down, Northern Ireland since 1999 and served as Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland from 2018–2019.

The Annual Meeting gathers senior church leaders and lay representatives from across its 15 member churches in Ireland, bringing together the broad spectrum of Irish Christianity. The Irish Council of Churches also maintains a structured dialogue with the Catholic Bishops’ Conference

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through the Irish Inter–Church Meeting, representatives of which were also in attendance.

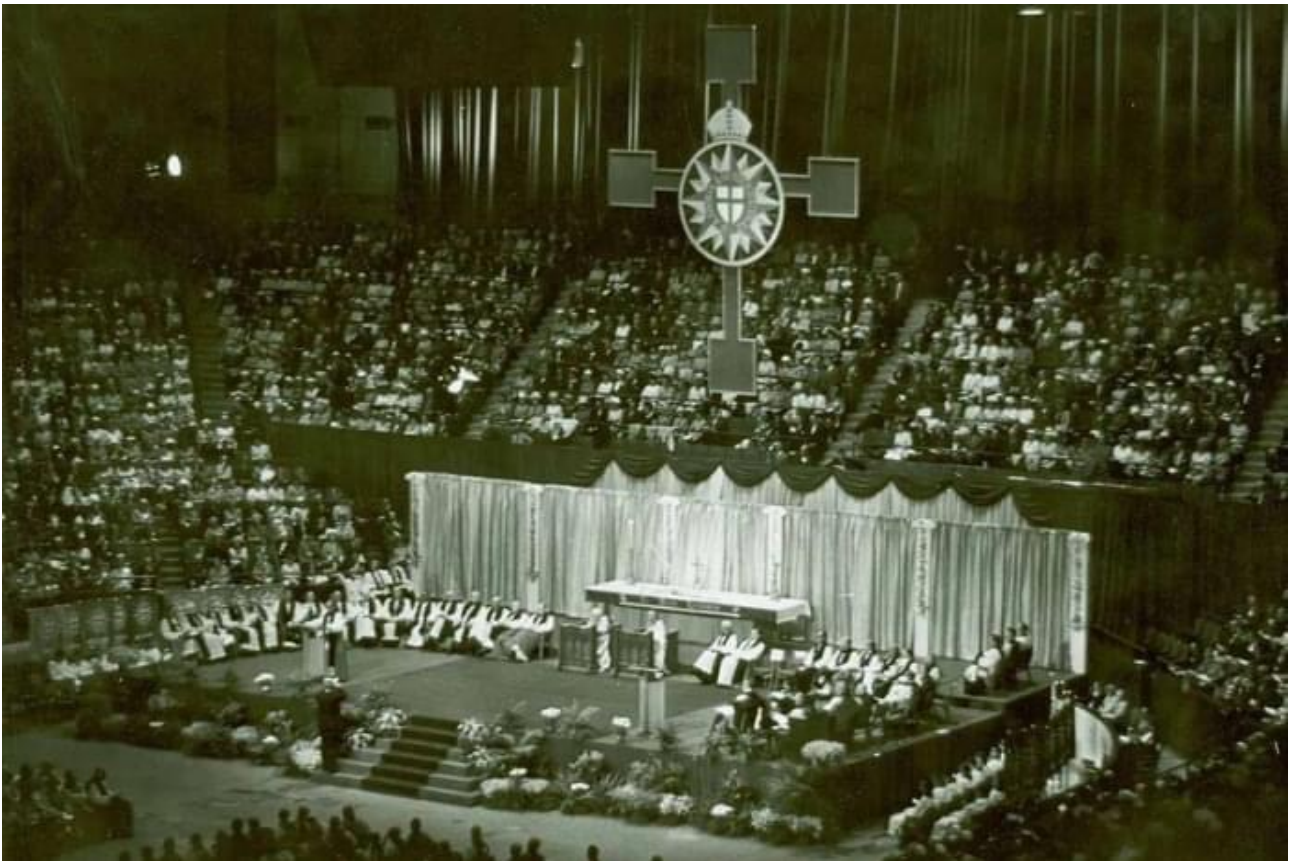
## **Conference marks 60th Anniversary of historic 1963 Toronto Anglican Congress**

**A significant international conference, marking a key moment in the history of the growth of Anglicanism worldwide has been taking place this week.**

"MRI at 60" is examining the history and influence of the 1963 Toronto Anglican Congress and its manifesto - 'Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence (MRI) in the Body of Christ'.

Anglicans from around the world have been discussing the Congress that brought to Toronto over 1000 bishops, clergy and laity from almost every diocese of the Anglican Communion and 17,000 worshippers to its thanksgiving service. The conference will also discuss the Congress's background and implementation of the MRI principles.

The MRI Declaration ended with a powerful call to action. It stated, "We are aware that such a programme as we propose, if it is seen in its true size and accepted, will mean the death of much that is familiar about our churches now. It will mean radical change in our priorities – even leading us to share with others at least as much as we spend on ourselves. It means the death of old isolations and inherited attitudes. It means a willingness to forgo many desirable things, in every church. In substance, what we are really



## Anglicans packed Maple Leaf Gardens for the opening service of the 1963 Toronto Anglican Congress

asking is the rebirth of the Anglican Communion, which means the death of many old things, but – infinitely more – the birth of entirely new relationships. We regard this as the essential task before the churches of the Anglican Communion now.”

During this month’s event, the Revd Canon Professor Mark Chapman, from Oxford University, gave the keynote address entitled “A Tale of Two Anglican Congresses: London 1908 and Toronto 1963.” Twenty-one papers were presented by speakers from all around the Anglican Communion including from Canada, the U.S.A., Australia, Kenya, Malawi, England, the Philippines and South Africa. The speakers took part in panel presentations.



The Deputy Secretary General at the Anglican Communion, Bishop Jo Bailey Wells, wpreached at the Thanksgiving Service at which Archbishop Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, presided, at St James Cathedral, Toronto on Sunday April 15. Associated events included a free public lecture by Professor Chapman called “On Consulting the Faithful: An Anglican understanding of the laity”, in St James’ Cathedral on Friday April 12.

Bishop Jo said, “The 1963 Congress marks a turning point in the journey of Anglicanism. Its conception of ‘mutual responsibility and independence’ has shaped the Anglican family such that it aptly describes our relationships around the Communion, recognising both autonomy and interdependence. On the one hand we are united in witness and mission; at the same time we acknowledge and celebrate our diversity. These things are not opposites. Radical as it was at the time, the 1963 Congress recognized the importance of lay leadership and the gift of indigenous voices – features contributing to establishing the Anglican Consultative Council in 1968. I am honoured to preach at the Thanksgiving Service. I look forward to celebrating what was a seminal event in the history of the Anglican Communion.”

The Revd Canon Stephen Spencer, Adviser for Theological Education and Lambeth Conference Implementation at the Anglican Communion, gave a paper at the conference. He said, “In a world that seems to be increasingly violent and intolerant it will be very helpful to reflect on how we can be mutually responsible and interdependent as churches of the Anglican Communion. We have so much to learn from each

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other and so much encouragement that we can give each other if only we stop judging each other and start listening to one other. I am looking forward to the conference as an opportunity to do this.”

This conference has been organized by the Canadian Church Historical Society, with co-sponsorship from the Historical Society of the Episcopal Church.

## **Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books**

### **New Irish Arts 30th Birthday Party**

**28th September 2024 in the Waterfront Hall**

Tickets are on sale from [[www.waterfront.co.uk](http://www.waterfront.co.uk)].

This one-off event will feature the New Irish Choir and Orchestra, our fabulous Youth Choirs and special guests including Laura Story, in a huge and vibrant celebration. The programme will focus on giving thanks – for the beauty of the created world, for the joy of making music, for the support of our audiences over the years, and also for the love of God which can be experienced by every human being.

“Music will span a huge range of styles including beautiful classical choral works, contemporary Christian worship

**30th**  
**BIRTHDAY**  
**PARTY**

**Saturday 28th September 2024**  
**@ 7:30pm**

**Waterfront Hall Belfast**  
New Irish Choir, Orchestra & Youth Choirs,  
with special guests including Laura Story.

[newirisharts.com](http://newirisharts.com)

**TICKETS ON SALE SOON!**

**NEW IRISH ARTS**

songs, Gospel and some fabulous new symphonic hymn arrangements where the whole audience can become part of the sound. As part of our audience, you'll get the chance to feature in our new live album, which is due for release at Christmas”



## **Book - Into the Heart of Romans by NT Wright**

**SPCK Publishing, £19.99, 224 pages**

**British scholar and Anglican clergyman NT Wright (who as Bishop of Durham was once one of the Church of England's most senior prelates) is among the most influential theologians of the past century, and, since the death of JDG Dunn, the world's preeminent interpreter of St Paul.**

Wright's ability to illuminate the long-shrouded promises of God to His image-bearing creatures in elegant and passionate prose has shaken the stale cage of Christian theology, which has for centuries been polluted by the Platonic supposition that matter, time and space are radically inferior to the disembodied spirit. So when his latest volume, *Into the Heart of Romans*, hit the shelves, the Christian world sat up to attention.

Like many of Wright's previous works, *Into the Heart of Romans* is an attempt to redress popular but flawed interpretations of sacred scripture. The tendency in some quarters to understand the Gospel as primarily having to do with "me and my salvation" or "souls going to heaven" is Wright's target here, as it misunderstands the vast sweep of scripture as much as it undersells God's promises – don't even get him started on the "rapture".

The tendency to interpret Paul as a Platonic dualist who pits the body against the spirit is to miss the far greater purpose

for which human beings were made. In Wright's reading of Romans, the ultimate destiny for the redeemed is not to dwell forever in a spiritual realm called "heaven", but to play a vital role in setting aright the crisis of the whole cosmos. Indeed, Paul never mentions the word "heaven" in Romans 8, and he never uses the term "heaven" in the sense of "where Christians will go after death" anywhere in his writing.

"The eternal security of God's people in the New Testament", says Wright, "has to do, not with their supposed disembodied post-mortem bliss, but with their resurrection from the dead into the rescued and renewed creation where they will have a truly human role to play ... The Messiah's inheritance, shared with all His people, is the whole redeemed creation, with forgiven sinners raised from the dead to share in ruling the new world." The emphasis of Paul's letter to the Romans, particularly chapter 8, is not salvation but vocation; it is not a set of directions on how to get to heaven but an intricate explication of what it means to be a true human bearing the imago Dei in the fallen world – and eventually in the new creation at the end of time. Humans were not meant merely to remain "passive throughout the story of salvation", but to be God's active agents within the world, sharing in His work.

Wright arrives at these stunning conclusions by adhering to three simple rules of exegesis. The first and most important is that the reader must take care to discover the overall thrust of the verse, chapter or entire letter. The depth and richness of Pauline text renders hopeless the exercise of plucking out a single line and attempting to discern the truth of it without proper context.

# Perspective

## More than music - Ralph Vaughan Williams

**The son of a vicar, Ralph Vaughan Williams was born at Down Ampney, Gloucestershire on 12th October 1872. Commencing piano lessons at five and violin a year later he passed his first music exams in 1880.**

Educated at Charterhouse, his academic and sporting achievements were modest, but the school encouraged his musical talents ensuring he was enrolled as a student at the Royal College of Music (RCM) in 1890. Here, he was greatly influenced by his composition tutor, Hubert Parry, composer of Jerusalem. Two years later, Williams went up to Trinity College, Cambridge to study History and Music before, having satisfied his family that he had obtained Academic qualifications, returned to RCM. During this second period, Williams graduated as a Bachelor of Music and became lifelong friends with budding composer Gustav Holst.

By 1901 Williams was married, a Doctor of Music and establishing a name as a composer, while supplementing his income writing for musical journals. After further studies in Paris, his compositions, drawing on traditional English songs from centuries before, were featured in several festivals and he was described as “one of the new front rank of British composers.”



However, the 42-year-old Williams did not hesitate to volunteer soon after the outbreak of war and enlisted into the Royal Army Medical Corps in 2/4th (London) Field Ambulance. Far older than most of the other recruits, he struggled with training, especially dress and turnout. However, deploying to France in early 1916 he found his forte as an ambulance driver on the Western Front. During long night journeys he composed symphonies in his head and conducted a soldiers' choir during off-duty time. In late 1916 the unit embarked for Greece and the subsequent battle of Doiran against the Bulgarians. Immediately afterwards, he was selected for a commission and, with a trace of irony, bade farewell to his section with; "my regret at leaving is that I shall cease to be a man.....and become an officer."

Williams adapted to officer training as well as he did soldier training and, again much older than his peers, was always in trouble for his sloppy turnout. Nevertheless, he was finally commissioned into the Royal Artillery on 23rd December 1917. Stationed in France in the same sector he had served in as an ambulance driver, he was a kind and considerate subaltern and popular with the soldiers. His Battery Commander however wrote; "He is most untidy in his ways and dress. I cannot say that I can recommend him for promotion to higher rank." Demobbed in 1919 Williams returned to the RCM as professor of Composition and wrote some of his most memorable works in the immediate post-war years. His Pastoral Symphony, begun in the cab of an ambulance, has a sadness that reflects the grief and loss of the Western Front.

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Williams turned down a knighthood and refused the post of Master of The King's Music upon the death of Edward Elgar in 1934. The following year, however, he was appointed to the Order of Merit. A prolific composer, he completed nine symphonies and six operas, and was furious in 1939 (at the age of 67) to have his offer to re-enlist refused.

Nevertheless he 'did his bit' by turning his hand to composing the scores for wartime propaganda films such as 49th Parallel and Coastal Command. Ralph Vaughan Williams OM died in 1958, his wartime service in the Royal Artillery hastening his deafness, which must have been a bitter blow for any composer. The Times summed up his legacy; "He cut the bonds that, from the times of Handel and Mendelssohn, had bound England hand and foot to the continent.....There is now an English music that can make its distinctive contribution to the comity of nations."

## Poem for today

### 'In Memory of My Mother' by Patrick Kavanagh

I do not think of you lying in the wet clay  
Of a Monaghan graveyard; I see  
You walking down a lane among the poplars  
On your way to the station, or happily

Going to second Mass on a summer Sunday  
You meet me and you say:  
'Don't forget to see about the cattle – '  
Among your earthiest words the angels stray.

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And I think of you walking along a headland  
Of green oats in June,  
So full of repose, so rich with life –  
And I see us meeting at the end of a town.

On a fair day by accident, after  
The bargains are all made and we can walk  
Together through the shops and stalls and markets  
Free in the oriental streets of thought.

O you are not lying in the wet clay,  
For it is a harvest evening now and we  
Are piling up the ricks against the moonlight  
And you smile up at us – eternally.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at [houstonmckelvey@mac.com](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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