

Church News Ireland

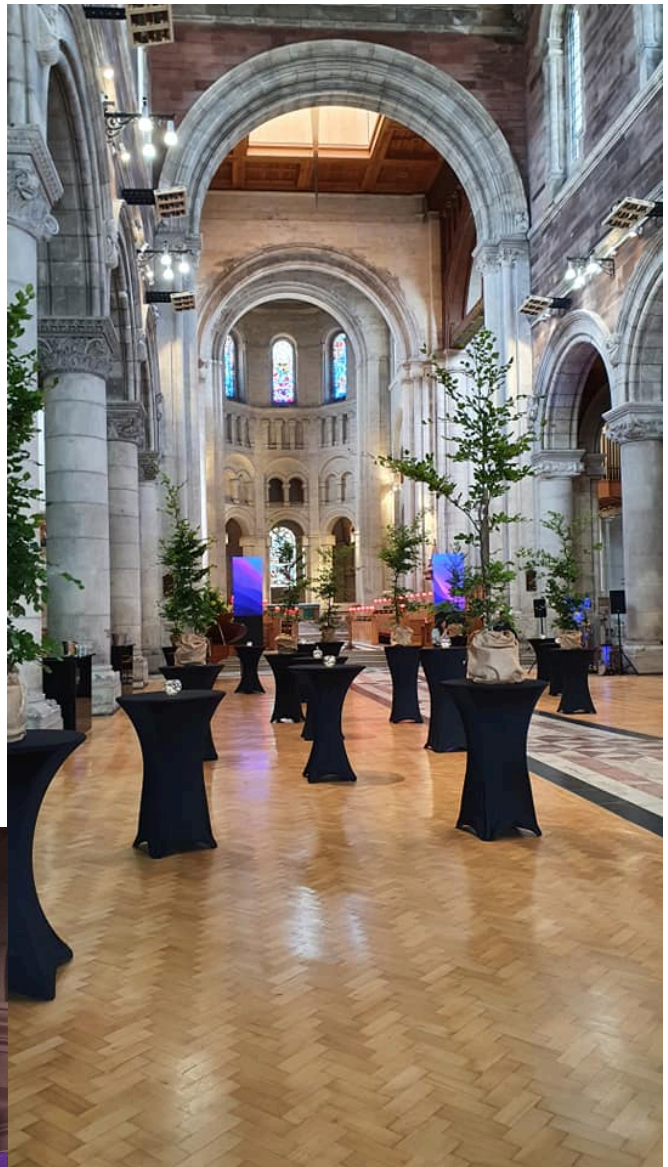


**Image of the day –
Tree scheme inside
Belfast Cathedral**

Image of the day

Tree scheme inside Belfast Cathedral

After a busy day yesterday with concerts by two visiting choirs from the USA, trees were placed throughout the Cathedral for an event in partnership with AL



Goodbody.

All the trees are being donated to the Inspire Wellbeing charity based at Lombard Street, Belfast. And the lectern adopted a different hue.



People and places

Archdeacon Adrian Wilkinson to be Bishop of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory

The Episcopal Electoral College for the Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory, meeting in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, has elected the Ven Adrian Wilkinson,

Archdeacon of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, as the new Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory.

He succeeds the Rt Revd Michael Burrows, who was translated as Bishop of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe on 14th April 2022, following his election to that role in January of this year.

The Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland, who chaired the Electoral College,

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said: ‘I am delighted that Archdeacon Wilkinson has been elected Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory. Ahead lies a most fruitful time for the bishop to get to know the clergy and people of the diocese and to establish him in the wider community of Kilkenny, Waterford and the South East. May God guide and equip Bishop Adrian in the days and months ahead as he embarks on his episcopal ministry in the Church of God.’

The Bishop-elect said: ‘I am humbled and honoured to have been elected Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory. While I will be sorry to leave Cork, a place where I have served very happily for over twenty years, I look forward to this new chapter in ministry. My childhood years were spent in Cashel, Ferns and Ossory and I look forward to working with the clergy and people there in the years ahead, as we proclaim our faith in word and action.’

Incoming moderator’s theme for the year is grace

The newly elected Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, Rev Dr John Kirkpatrick, used his address to the opening night of the all-Ireland denomination’s General Assembly in Belfast on Wednesday night to reflect on one of the basic tenets of the Christian faith – grace.

The 65-year-old minister of Portrush Presbyterian Church in County Antrim, was addressing 800 church members, overseas guests and civic dignitaries during the opening service ahead of three days and two evenings of debate by



ministers and elders from the Church’s 500-plus congregations.

He said that the famous hymn describes grace as “amazing”, but said that essentially grace is “God’s favour towards the underserving, something that changes everything for those who understand it...”.

Rev Kirkpatrick added: “If God’s grace works in the hard places then it is seen to stand a real test. The message that I will try to share this year is neither new nor is it complicated – it is the story of Grace not Works.

“This is the story of every Christian and we need often to be reminded about it, to reflect and meditate on it. It is a story

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that anchors our lives in troubled times, that fills our hearts with courage to face the hard time, moves us to forgive and love our opponent, produces a generous spirit [and] has sent people to the ends of the earth,” the moderator said.

Using the first two chapters of the Apostle Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians as his text, Dr Kirkpatrick looked at grace at work in the past, grace at work in the present and how grace shapes our future.

In terms of that future, Dr Kirkpatrick said, it was a plan that the church is fully included in for the grace of God enables its members to fulfil its work. Citing Ephesians 2:10, he said: “...we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them”.

The moderator, the 177th person to hold the office since the establishment of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland 182 years ago, concluded by saying that, “His spirit, the Holy Spirit...is the guarantee, and who unites us to Jesus forever”.

2022 MTh Awards at C of I Theological College

Congratulations to the students who were awarded prizes at the most recent Court of Examiners meeting.

The Weir Prize is awarded to the student in each year group who attains the best overall result. The Literature Committee Prize is for excellence in the dissertation and is awarded by

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the External Examiner. It leads to publication of the student's dissertation within the Braemor Series.
Weir prize for Residential Year 1: Cameron Mack
Weir prize for Residential Year 2: Stu Armstrong
Weir prize for Residential Year 3: Edwin Aiken
Weir prize for Blended Learning Years 1–4: Scott Evans
Literature Committee Prize for Excellent Dissertation: Philip McKinley
[<http://dlvr.it/SSM2KQ>]

Small Woodland Grant Scheme

The Small Woodland Grant Scheme is now open in N Ireland.

This grant is a part of the Forests For our Future programme which aims to plant 18 million trees by 2030. The scheme provides an initial payment of £2925/ha as well as an annual premium.

The Small Woodland Grant Scheme is specifically for new native woodland planting of 0.20 hectares and larger.

Applications close on 31st August 2022. More information on how to apply can be found below.

[<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/small-woodland-grant-scheme-information-booklet>]

CNI



‘Open Door’ ministry at Christ Church Londonderry

Christ Church Londonderry will be opened to the public on a daily basis from next week under its new ‘Open Door’ ministry.

The initiative was unveiled informally, this week, when dozens of children from the Model Primary School visited the church along with their teachers.

Small groups of pupils were given short ‘guided tours’ of the building on Infirmary Road by the Rector, Archdeacon Robert Miller; the CCCMSP Group’s Pastoral Director, Rev Canon Katie McAteer; and Select Vestry members Jim Kelley and Irwin Thompson.



The pupils got a chance to test their learning skills by answering questions about the church as they made their way round the building. During their visit, they heard about Christ Church’s 200-year-old history, the stories behind its famous stained-glass windows and the background to the ornate carvings on the altar; quite a few of the children also took the opportunity to climb into the pulpit and experience what it felt like to be a preacher.

Under the ‘Open Door’ initiative, the church will be open daily – “except, perhaps, on Christmas Day,” Jim suggested. “We want the building to be not just a congregational thing for the churchgoers, but [a building] for community use.

“Ordinary people can come in and sit and meditate if they want,” Jim said, “it’s available for that purpose. But it’s also interesting from an historical point of view: from the First

World War material we have; the windows are of national significance; we've got records here – we never sent them to Dublin, so they weren't destroyed in the big fire in the 1920s – we've got all our records going back to 1801. We had a lady in last weekend, [who] knew that her grandparents were married here. We had the book out and she found them. 'I don't suppose my mum would be in here?' We found her baptism – there were tears rolling down her face."

Irwin delighted in sharing the stories behind the famous windows and pointed out some of the well-known names on a plaque commemorating local victims of the two World Wars. "Fifty people from this church died in the First World War," he said, "out of the one hundred who left to fight in it, so half of them never came back. I was never fond of history at school, but the people's stories fascinate me."

Christ Church is already established as a venue for musical performances, but the Select Vestry has ambitious plans to reinstate the first Thursday recitals which were once a feature of life in the parish. The Vestry also intends to create an exhibition area in an under-used part of the church and to digitise parish records so they will be more easily available to historians and visitors – including from overseas.

"We've got an idea for some drama stuff, as well," Jim says, "with the First World War. The Imperial War Museum is making grants available for that so we're following that one up. And so it goes on. We're just opening the doors and saying, 'This can be used. It's one of the biggest halls in town. We can use it for other things. We've got brilliant

acoustics. Radio Three have used it [for broadcasting performances]. Barry Douglas comes to play the piano in here. Ruth McGinley performs here. So, it's brilliant from that point of view.'

“To be perfectly frank, what we're actually talking about is saying that we've been a sort of closed door, exclusive thing – because of circumstances, nobody's fault, it's been one of those things – and what we're now saying is we're a Christian community, and you can use it for community use, but you can also use it for religious purposes. If you need an act of faith in some way this is a place that you can use.”

The 'Open Door' project is itself, in a sense, an act of faith.

The 'Open Door' project is itself, in a sense, an act of faith. Only five years ago, Christ Church was violated in a break-in, during which one of the stained-glass windows was smashed and extensive damage was caused to the church organ. So did Jim detect any hint of trepidation among his fellow Select Vestry members? “Not at all. The Select Vestry were enthusiastic and said, 'Yes'. I've spoken to Bishop Andrew; to Bishop Donal across the road [in St Eugene's Cathedral]; both of them said, 'Great, go for it.' Long Tower does it. Pennyburn does it. St Augustine's is doing it. We're doing it. So, the whole area now is raising its profile and we'll just see what comes of it.”

The 'Open Door' initiative goes public on Monday 27th June. From then on, the church will be open from 10.30am to 4pm, seven days a week.

News reports

Baptist Union to consider allowing ministers to marry a same-sex partner

The Baptist Union of Great Britain has revealed it is "reflecting on a request" to change its rules around same sex marriage for its accredited ministers.

In a communication with its churches, it confirmed a request was made in 2020 by 70 members - the majority of which are ministers

The request asked that the Ministerial Recognition Rules be changed to remove a line which says that marriage is defined as "exclusively between a man and a woman".

That change would mean that any minister who married their same sex partner would no longer be committing gross misconduct and therefore have their accreditation revoked.

In a long letter addressing the issue, Baptist Union general secretary Lynn Green said: "It is this question that has arisen from the grassroots that now needs to be responded to by us nationally.

"The process of doing this was begun at Baptist Union Council in March because Council is responsible for approving any changes to the Ministerial Recognition Rules.

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"Council is very aware of the significance of any possible change and is committed to creating a process that considers and responds to this question in a way that reflects the whole of our Baptist movement.

"I can only apologise if you have been given the impression that any decision would be reached without consultation.

"I am completely clear that this is not the way we do things as Baptists. If you would like further details, please read this report of our current position, the question being asked and the initial discussion of Baptist Union Council."

A number of conversations and a consultation will take place in the coming months but no time scale has been provided. The Baptist Union has, however, confirmed that no decision will be made at the Council meeting in October.

As part of the Baptist Union, individual churches have autonomy to set their own rules in regards to hosting same sex marriages of members in their buildings. When the government changed the law in 2013 to allow churches to host gay weddings, the Union said it would not intervene, "upholding the liberty of a local church to determine its own mind on this matter".

However after further reflection, in 2016, it released a statement urging churches who were considering conducting same sex marriages to "refrain from doing so out of mutual respect".

Welby asks tech giants to help poorer countries

Tech giants such as Elon Musk’s firm, Tesla, should share their knowledge with poorer countries, the Archbishop of Canterbury has said.

The Most Rev Justin Welby said: “If these God-given benefits of scientific and technological wisdom are confined to a small minority of the planet, that can only lead to greater ... inequality and inequities of power.”

He said the growth of major firms “is a very good thing” for world trade, adding: “I just like to see it spread well around the world so far more countries ... have that sort of motive and driving power within their own country, for the good of their people.”

Asked for examples of firms, he said: “Well, the obvious ones would be some of the high-tech ones which the genius of their founders, people like Tesla, has created huge amounts of jobs and will continue to do so [and] Apple and all the rest of them.

“And those are examples to be admired in the way that they have developed from nothing through entrepreneurial skills of a very high order indeed. But wouldn’t it be wonderful if Africa and other parts of the world can produce equally strong developers, jobs and trade.”

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Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

General Assembly online

Here is a snippet of Opening Night when Rev Dr John Kirkpatrick from Portrush Presbyterian was installed as Presbyterian Moderator for 2022-2023 [#pciga22](#)

Annual Human Rights Lecture 2022

You are invited to join the free livestream of the Annual Human Rights Lecture 2022. The keynote speaker will be Lady Brenda Hale. It will take place on Monday 4 July from 4pm – 5.30pm.

For more information and to join online see:

[<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/annual-human-rights-lecture-2022-livestream-tickets-361049718427>]

Open To All schools campaign

The Open To All campaign works on behalf of Northern Ireland's controlled schools.

You are invited to find out more about the Controlled schools role in education in the region, alongside other churches. Please visit [trc-churcheducation.org]

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Watch the TRC video to hear controlled schools tell us how their school is #OpenToAll. If you are associated with a controlled school get involved!

Access video to post on your social media channels here -
[bit.ly/3Hyhexc]

You are encouraged to get in touch and tell the TRC your story at -

[info@csscni.co.uk @EdAuthority]

Archbishop of York's Pause for Thought on BBC Radio2

The Archbishop says - Why not build some slow time today? Put your chair in the window. Look at the world. See what you can see. Read my BBC Radio2 Pause for Thought...

Last week I slowed down Zoe – I switched everything off and went on a long walk.

In fact I walked the St Cuthbert's Way from Melrose in the Scottish borders to Holy Island in Northumberland.

And the world opened up to me. I saw orchids growing in the hedgerow. A hare racing up the path ahead of me. Seals basking on the rocks. A cairn on an isolated hill top in the Cheviots.

None of this could be seen from a car window. I had to get off the beaten track. I had to slow down.



I slowed down to what some people call the speed of thought, or what I like to think of as God's pace, walking speed, the speed of prayer.

Someone once said that Jesus changed the world at three miles per hour. What they meant, is that he walked everywhere.

And as he walked, he met people and listened to them and ministered to them and talked to them and changed them.

And what might also be implied, is that our feverish demand for speed, and for getting everything done yesterday, is also changing the world, but not necessarily for the better.

It seems these days that many of us, including me, want to get from A to B in the quickest possible time by the shortest

possible route. But not only does this put every moment of the day under enormous stress and the endless pressure to produce and achieve, it means I miss out on all the beauty in between, things that can only really be appreciated by slowing down. Some things – you might even say the best things – simply can't be done in a hurry. Like producing the best wine, or cooking a really good stew, or growing a garden.

And as I walked, this was my prayer: Lord, make me slow to rush ahead of you – because that's what I think is happening in so much that is wrong and confused in our world today and we see it's devastating effects in displaced people, heat waves, flood, forest fire and famine - but make us quick to follow where you lead, and find a new and better way of inhabiting this earth.

You're probably not able to go on pilgrimage this week as I was lucky enough to do last week, in fact it's been hard to get anywhere with the various strike action – so perhaps there has been a chance for some slow time, downtime, time to enjoy your day. I might take a long cut home. Throw away the teabags and rediscover the lost happiness of those two minutes we used to have when we warmed the pot and waited for the tea to mash. I'm going to switch off the telly tonight. Put a chair in the window. Look at the world. See what I can see. Count my blessings.

You see, I don't want any more time saving devices in my life, because they just add to the pressure of fitting more in. I want some time creating devices. Things that will slow me down.

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Listen again at:

[<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m00188xw>]

Perspective

Lambeth 2022 and African Anglicanism by David Goodhew

There are around 100 million Anglicans. And two in every three Anglicans worldwide are African. So, as the Anglican Communion attempts to gather at the 2022 Lambeth Conference, the character of African Anglicanism matters massively.

This article looks, first, at the large number of Africans who will boycott the conference, then at the eclipse of the once central South African Anglican church, then at the new provinces emerging in the most unlikely parts of the continent. Americans and Brits may or may not realize this truth, but to understand the Anglican Communion, we have to start in Africa.

The Lambeth Boycott

The Ugandan, Nigerian, and Rwandan primates are boycotting Lambeth 2022. Other provinces may well do the same. There is uncertainty as to the precise size of these three churches. Gordon-Conwell's Center for the Study of Global Christianity led by Todd Johnson and Gina Zurlo is widely seen as the "gold standard" of religious demography. Johnson and Zurlo estimate that these churches constitute

around two-thirds of African Anglicans.[i] That means they represent over a third of the entire Communion.

These provinces are active members of the conservative Anglican bloc, GAFCON. Whatever readers of this blog make of GAFCON, it constitutes a key segment of the Communion, too large to be ignored. While there is longstanding debate over whether or not the Lambeth Conference carries (or should carry) any binding authority, it has typically been taken as expressive of the mind of the Communion. The size of the Lambeth boycott, though, means that any decisions taken at Lambeth 2022 can be neither.

One possible olive branch lies, ironically, in the ongoing tragedy facing Nigerian Anglicans who have been harshly persecuted by Islamic militants for decades. Archbishop Welby has shown commendable concern for their plight. TEC has been far less vocal on the suffering of Nigerian Anglicans than the suffering, for example, of Palestinians (aside from protest at the abduction of the Chibok girls, which happened eight years ago). Were TEC and the wider Communion to give more solid support to persecuted Nigerian Anglicans, this would both be morally right and act as an olive branch to the Nigerian church. It would show that, though absent, Nigeria's Anglicans remain of concern to those attending the Lambeth Conference.

The Eclipse of South Africa

In 1970, around one in six African Anglicans were from South Africa; by 2015, that figure had plummeted to one in 20 African Anglicans. South African Anglicans have grown

numerically in the last 50 years, but far more slowly than most of African Anglicanism, meaning they are rapidly being eclipsed. Whereas in many parts of Africa congregations, dioceses, and provinces have proliferated in recent decades, in South Africa little such dynamism has been seen or seems likely to be seen.

South African Anglicanism is highly conservative, in the sense that it remains defined by the fight against apartheid which ended nearly 30 years ago. The church's struggles against the apartheid state were hugely commendable. But the country achieved democratic rule in 1994 and has long wrestled with different issues.

And many Western Anglicans are at least 30 years out of date in their thinking about South Africa (and Africa). They continue to view South African Anglicanism in terms of its work against apartheid and ignore decades of relative decline (and the advent of new centers of Anglicanism elsewhere in Africa). The rise of new centers of African Anglicanism means that South African Anglicanism will be pushed further toward the margins in coming years, unless it can discover some of the ecclesial dynamism present elsewhere on the continent.

The Rise of New African Anglicanism

African Anglicanism is changing fast as it expands fast. Among the most rapidly growing areas are Sudan and South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Sudan and South Sudan grew from 300,000 church members to 2,230,000 church members between 1970 and 2015. Prior to 1972 Congolese Anglicans could not be

directly present at Lambeth, as the first Congolese diocese was only formed that year. Before 1972 the church was governed by the Church of Uganda. Now Congo is a province with 14 dioceses and over 500,000 members. Sudan, South Sudan, and Congo are some of the poorest and most conflict-ridden countries on earth. Yet Anglicanism has taken root and flourished there in the midst of great suffering. Congolese Anglicans talk of the value of “utaratibu,” “order.” There is a sense in which the structures in liturgy and church life have been a great blessing in a context where so much is chaotic.

Even more recent are the two new provinces of Alexandria (covering North Africa and the Horn of Africa) and of Mozambique and Angola, created in 2019 and 2021 respectively. Archbishop Mouneer Anis, the first Primate of the Province of Alexandria, has been a key figure in the Global South group of primates. The Global South grouping acts as a broader conservative block in the Communion, less vocal than GAFCON, but similarly opposed to Western liberalism.

What is striking is how African Anglicanism has moved far beyond the areas covered by the former British empire. It is now pushing into areas whose lingua franca is Portuguese, French, or Arabic — rather than English.

Conclusion

Where is African Anglicanism going? This is a huge and complex movement.

Over half of African Anglicanism is so vehemently opposed to the current direction of the Communion that it will boycott Lambeth 2022. And the bulk of Anglicans who do attend Lambeth are strongly opposed to the dominant stance of TEC. The one African church which has consistently drawn closer to the liberal agenda, South Africa, is a much-diminished force within African Anglicanism. Alongside this, the consecration of women bishops in Kenya and South Sudan is a sign that conservative African Anglicanism contains considerable variety.

African Anglicanism has expanded in many parts of Africa at a phenomenal pace — often faster than the rate of population growth. It is expanding way beyond the former territories of the British empire. This is a heady, unpredictable mix. It would be unwise to assume such expansion has run its course. African Anglicanism continues to grow at pace, even as Western Anglicanism in many places is declining.

[i] Johnson and Zurlo estimated that, in 2015, there were around 57 million Anglicans in Africa. They calculated that 22 million were in Nigeria, 14 million in Uganda and 1.4 million in Rwanda. That number will certainly have risen significantly since 2015. Andrew Mckinnon in the *Journal of Africa Studies* endorsed the Ugandan figures but argued for a much lower figure for Nigeria. However, the Mckinnon research was striking for relying on general surveys of the population and did not consider any evidence from, or concerning, Nigerian Anglicans themselves. It needs to be read alongside studies of actual church life in Nigeria, some of which can be surveyed in, for example: Richard Burgess, “Nigeria” in D. Goodhew (ed.), *Growth and Decline in the*

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Anglican Communion, 1980 to the Present, (Routledge 2017). Johnson and Zurlo's work combines both non-church and church data and is widely seen as the best available data. For more data, see their World Christian Database.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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
