



Loyalist prisoner turned pastor speaking tour on 'How Healing Comes'

A former member of the Ulster Volunteer Force who became a pastor in England after serving an 11-year sentence in the Maze prison will speak at

a number of venues between February 18 and 22.

Pastor David 'Packie' Hamilton will be speaking on the theme 'How Healing Comes' at churches including St Anne's Cathedral, St George's, Belfast, and Lisburn Cathedral.

David was imprisoned in 1978. He had a strong Christian conversion in 1980 which he attributes to the fervent prayers of an elderly lady called Annie Beggs.

On his release from prison in 1983, David became a full time Christian worker, evangelist and preacher, working firstly with Prison Fellowship and Teen Challenge before becoming a pastor of a large independent church in Manchester.

He is now retired and undertakes preaching engagements wherever and whenever called. He is a very good preacher and has a repertoire of a rich number of factual stories to tell and brings them alive with his style which can be very humorous at times. On previous visits to Belfast, many have commented on how impacted they were by David's testimony and preaching.

David is the author of *A Cause Worth Living For: My Journey Out of Terrorism*, published in 2008.

His appearance in St Anne's Cathedral will be at Special Service of Healing organised by the interdenominational Divine Healing Ministries.

David's full schedule is as follows:

Lisburn Cathedral (Day of Prayer), Saturday, 18th February, 2017 @ 11am and 12.30pm

Lisburn Cathedral, Sunday, 19th February, 2017 @ 11am

St. George's, Belfast, Monday, 20th February, 2017 @ 1pm

St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, Monday 20th February @ 8pm

St. Finian's, Cregagh Park, Belfast, Tuesday, 21st February, 2017 @ 8pm

Clonard Monastery, Wednesday, 22nd February, 2017 @ 8pm

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Orthodox Choir in Waterford Cathedral Ecumenical Service on RTE 1 TV

On 22 January, Waterford Cathedral will host an ecumenical service on RTE 1 at 11 a.m. Three choirs have been invited to join the Christ Church Cathedral Choir directed by Eric Sweeney. The choirs are The Waterford Male Voice Choir, The Slav Orthodox Choir (in Ukrainian national dress) and the Choir of Newtown School.

“Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Methodists and members of the Orthodox, Redeemed Christian Church of God and Quaker communities will take part in the service. The Dunmore East Christian Fellowship (Amish) community would have liked to take part but cannot attend that morning,” says Dean Maria Jansson.

“Our diversity will be celebrated and division repented. The service which will mark the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation Period was devised by the World Council of Churches on the theme of *Reconciliation: The Love of Christ Compels Us* 2 Corinthians 5: 14-20 We will be taking over Studio 1 in RTE (which normally hosts the Late Late) and pray

that a sincere diversity of discipleship will enable the pulling down of the walls that divide us. I believe in an ecumenical commitment that works 365 days a year, so always feel a bit uneasy about a token 'week' of Christian unity.

However, at times, it is useful to gather and pray concertedly on the theme of Christian unity and understanding.”

Major award for well known Belfast priest

Fr Gary Donegan, who was priest at Ardoyne's Holy Cross Church for over 15 years before moving to the Tobar Mhuire in Crossgar, **Co Down**, was presented with the Annual Community Relations Exceptional Achievement Award.

The prominent cleric ministered in **Ardoyne** during some of its most turbulent years and was Rector during the Holy Cross School blockade in 2001.

Fr Donegan has also dealt with the ongoing issue of suicide in the district including one



period which saw 13 teenagers die in the space of six weeks in 2004.

The Community Relations Council Award “recognises exceptional achievement of an individual in promoting community relations, intercultural work or peace building in Northern Ireland”.

CRC Chairman, Peter Osborne, said Fr Gary Donegan has had a “profound impact in the Ardoyne area and beyond”.

He added: “He is a man of deep integrity who has worked tirelessly in building peace,

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community relations and better understanding in Ardoyne. I've had the privilege of working with Gary and have witnessed his unwavering commitment to peace and reconciliation.

Final call for Dublin & Glendalough Schools Choir Competition

Children in national schools all over Dublin & Glendalough have been singing their hearts out in preparation for the Diocesan National Schools Choir Competition which takes place this spring. The competition is being organised as part of the Dublin & Glendalough 800 celebrations and aims to nurture the talent which exists within the schools.

Entries have been flooding in and as the closing date is in the next couple of days a final call is being made for schools to submit their applications for this wonderful opportunity to showcase their pupils' musical flair. Entry packs have been sent out to all diocesan schools but if for some reason your school has not received the details or your entry has been delayed please contact the Revd Eugene Griffin as soon as possible on 086-3826646.

Throughout the Dublin & Glendalough 800 commemorations, events have been organised to honour our diocesan past, celebrate what is happening here today and look to the future with hope. The choir competition will foster a sense of unity among the schools of the dioceses and will give children to sing to a wider audience.

The competition will culminate in an event in Christ Church Cathedral on April 2.

‘Why sing?’ new choir training video online

Church Music Dublin has recently added a new choir training video to its website (www.churchmusicdublin.org). The video, entitled ‘Why sing?’ is presented by acclaimed choral director, Mark Duley, and is the first video in a series of five on the subject of singing in church and choir training.

In the video, Mark talks about how we sing but also why we sing, who sings and what we sing. He suggests that singing is the glue that binds communities together and in a church context singing binds us together in worship.

The new video can be viewed at: <http://www.churchmusicdublin.org/choir-training-videos/>

Church Music Dublin is an agency of the United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough but members are pleased to share their work further afield. They provide training, resources and information to musicians and clergy in parish churches. Their vision is that singing will be at the heart of worship in every parish church.

Police investigation of comments after Quran reading in Cathedral

Offensive comments directed at clergy at St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow, have prompted a police investigation after the Quran was read at a service last week.

Police Scotland confirmed it is investigating remarks after the Epiphany service contained a recitation from the Islamic holy book denying Jesus was the son of God – a key Christian doctrine.

"Police Scotland will not tolerate any form of hate crime and encourages all communities to continue working together to ensure no one feels threatened or marginalised," a spokesman said.

Major church groups merge to lobby for LGBT inclusion

The fight for LGBT inclusion across the UK Church is to get a boost as two groups that have for decades lobbied for change merge.

Changing Attitude and the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement (LGCM) announced on Friday that they will be joining forces.

"We've been working closely with Changing Attitude for some time now and we have so much in common, and so much to gain from working together," said LGCM's chief executive Tracey Byrne.

"We both bring wisdom and experience to our work, and Changing Attitude's deep understanding of the Church of England is complemented by LGCM's insights from across and beyond the denominations. We want to see



all that energy, commitment and vision combined to bring about real and lasting change."

LGCM has been working for more than 40 years to lobby for the full inclusion of gay, lesbian and bisexual people in the life of Christian churches, while Changing Attitude has focused on the Church of England for two decades.

"We have a really firm foundation from which to build a new movement which draws in all people of goodwill who want to see the Church welcome LGBT people on equal terms with our sisters and brothers," Byrne said.

A spokesperson for Changing Attitude, Jeremy Timm, said: "This is a really exciting opportunity for us to further LGCM and Changing Attitude's work, to make ourselves a resource and a force for change in the Churches as they continue in their journey of understanding in relation to sexuality and gender.

"We firmly believe we can do this better together and as both boards of trustees have been talking and listening to one another over the past six months, we've become really excited and energised about what the future holds."

Jeremy Pemberton, LGCM's chair of trustees and a Church of England clergyman who in December lost a claim he was discriminated against when his licence to practise was removed after he married his gay partner, said the new merger would bring transformation for LGBT people in the Church.

"If we're going to reach out to a new generation with the message that the gospel is good news for everyone, then we'll all need to commit ourselves to making that a credible and authentic claim for LGBT people too," he said.

"That will involve humble listening and prophetic action at every level of the Churches, from our leaders and from the many people we know are longing for change. The new movement will be uniquely placed to resource that kind of transformation."

News briefs

+++ Nursery teacher for Kiwoko hospital wanted - CMS Ireland is a Christian Mission organisation that exists to help God's people engage in God's mission. The Society is seeking to recruit a short-term volunteer to support our Mission Partners and Staff at Kiwoko Hospital by teaching in a local nursery where their children will attend. The successful applicant will be a qualified nursery teacher or someone with experience of working with children of nursery school age. For further information and application details, contact CMS Ireland's Personnel Manager:
personnel@cmsireland.org Tel: +44 2890775020 or +353 (0) 14 97 09 31 or visit www.cmsireland.org Application Closing Date: Friday 10th February 2017

+++ Puppet Training Day - Church of the Good Shepherd in Monkstown (Connor) is hosting a Puppet Training Day by One Way UK. This takes place on Saturday January 21 2017 from 10am until 4.30pm, with registration from 9.30am. Tea/ Coffee are included, but participants need to bring a packed lunch. Cost is £15 per person. To book go online: www.onewayuk.com or telephone: 01472 241068. For more details contact Liz on 07896 339771. This event is funded through an 'Areas at Risk' grant.

+++ Evangelicalism in France is on the rise - a study by the National Council of Evangelicals in France (CNEF) has found. The study reported by Evangelical Focus shows around 35 new evangelical churches were opened in France last year or three a month. Daniel Liechti, the president of the CNEF's New Church Plants Committee told French newspaper La Croix that the growth of evangelical Christians in France had been steady during the last 20 years. However, he said: "Within two years we may be able to say that this pace is even accelerating slightly more." The study takes account of churches that have closed, leading to an accurate picture of growth in France. However, it refers only to churches that are in membership

with CNEF, which represents around 70 per cent of all evangelical churches in the country. There are around 650,000 evangelical Christians in France, around a third of all Protestants, and according to CNEF study the number has increased tenfold in the last 60 years. France is an overwhelmingly Catholic country, with an estimated 56 per cent of the population having been baptised. However, it suffers from an aging and over-stretched priesthood and a shortage of vocations, and weekly mass-going is estimated at only around six per cent.

+++ Record drop in Church of Sweden - A record number of people are leaving the Church of Sweden, **according to new figures**. The statistics show 86,000 members of the Church left in 2016. Given the population of the whole country is around 10 million, the drop in membership is significant. The Church of Sweden formally separated from the state in 2000 and since then the number of Swedes deciding to sever their ties has increased. Despite this, official figures show 63 per cent of the population are members and pay the 'Church tax' accordingly. Like many European countries, Sweden's Church was established by law for many generations. In neighbouring Norway, a

similar separation between the state and the Church is taking place, with January 1, marking the formal 'divorce'.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Queen's University, Belfast, warns over Brexit 'risks'

BBC News

Queen's University warns its ability to attract international staff, students and significant EU research funding faces "challenges and risks" due to Brexit.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-38603565>

Bishop Daly's ginger cat Tom finds new home in Coleraine

BBC News

A homeless cat belonging to the Late Bishop Edward Daly finds a new parish in County Londonderry.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-foyle-west-38571209>

BBC/Yorkshire Post/Northern Echo

Reports that the Archbishop of York has called for cabinet ministers to champion the north of England and for more devolution from South to North, in a House of Lords debate (see above). The Archbishop said there needed to be a more

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diverse economy that draws on the skills of people in the north of England. 'If Brexit prompts a shift in that direction, it may just have been worth the uncertainty we are currently experiencing,' he told the House of Lords.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-38598631>

<http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/brexit-upheaval-may-be-worth-it-for-the-north-claims-archbishop-1-8332045>

Northern Echo

Reports on the start of the Archbishop of York's mission in the Northern Ryedale deanery from Friday, which will see him visit a number of places including Michelin-star The Star Inn, at Harome, near Helmsley, over the following three days. Dr Sentamu, a keen cook, has been invited into the kitchen of The Star Inn, by chef Andrew Pern and he will meet the chef and his team on Saturday afternoon. The mission is the first in a series which will see the Archbishop go back on the road to visit all 21 deaneries in the Diocese of York over the next two years.

Premier/Christian Today

Reports that the Archbishops' Council has awarded more than £9 million for projects in seven dioceses across the country (see above).

The grants, part of the strategic development funding stream, have been awarded to Birmingham, Worcester, Chelmsford, Bristol, Chichester, Leicester and Liverpool dioceses. *Christian Today* features an example of Fresh Expressions of church in the Diocese of Chelmsford. Bishop Stephen Cottrell is quoted. <http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Church-of-England-gives-9-million-for-evangelism>

Guard, ITV (Weds) Christian Today

Reports that the funeral of Jill Saward will take place on Tuesday January 17 at Lichfield Cathedral in Staffordshire. A statement released by her family says all those who knew and loved Jill are invited to pay their last respects. Ms Saward, who died last week aged 51 years old, became a tireless campaigner on behalf of victims of sexual violence after she was raped at her father's vicarage in Ealing, west London, in 1986.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jan/11/jill-saward-family-invite-funeral>

<http://www.itv.com/news/central/2017-01-11/jill-saward-family-announce-funeral-plans/>

Exp

Reports that British millennials, born between 1980 and 2000, believe they no longer live in a Christian country despite thinking religion plays an important role in people's lives. A total of 41 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds said Britain has "no specific religious identity" in a ComRes poll published to launch the new Faith Research Centre in Westminster. In contrast, of those aged 65 and over, 74 per cent believe Britain is a Christian country while only 20 per cent think the country has no specific religious identity.
<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/753614/Millennials-Britain-not-Christian-country-ComRes-poll>

Farming Today

Feature on the work of Agriculture Chaplains and the Farming Community Network. The item features the Revd Janet Nicholls, an agricultural chaplain for the Diocese of Chelmsford. "Coming from a farming family myself, I am very aware of the pressures families are under," she says. "When you live, work and socialise together, big issues in any one of these areas can quickly affect all three. "With fewer people working on farms, isolation is an increasing issue, so being able to talk to someone is becoming much more relevant."

<http://www.fwi.co.uk/farm-life/how-church-support-for-farmers-goes-well-beyond-religion.htm>

Christian Today

Reports that the Archbishop of Canterbury has been urged to discipline a Scottish Episcopal cathedral over a reading of the Koran at an Epiphany service. Archbishop Justin was asked to intervene by GAFCON UK after a service last week at St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow. A spokesman for Lambeth Palace is quoted.

Church Times/Clean Energy News/Pension Funds/Pensions and Investments/Climate Wire

Further coverage of the launch of the Transition Pathway Initiative, co-chaired by the Church of England's National Investing Bodies. The Initiative brings together asset owners and asset managers to assess the progress companies are making towards reducing their carbon emissions.

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2017/13-january/news/uk/c-of-e-equips-investors-to-monitor-climate-impact>

<http://www.cleanenergynews.co.uk/news/efficiency/church-of-england-launches-energy-company-climate-action-ranking>

<http://www.pensionfundsonline.co.uk/content/pension-funds-insider/investment/climate-change-framework-launched/2376>

<http://www.pionline.com/article/20170111/ONLINE/170119958/global-asset-owners-managers-launch-initiative-to-track-shift-to-low-carbon-economy>

<http://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060048248/search?keyword=transition+Pathway+Initiative>

Comment

Spectator: Anne Jolis writes about “How the Church of England changed my life”.

<http://www.spectator.co.uk/2017/01/how-the-church-of-england-changed-my-life/>

Obituary

Telegraph: Dr Una Kroll campaigner for women’s ordination.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/obituaries/2017/01/12/dr-una-kroll-campaigner-womens-ordination-obituary/>

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