

‘Forgiveness remembers’ theme of two Derry clerics’ book



Significant’, ‘subversive’ and ‘a little gem’ were among the words used to describe a new book on reconciliation by two clergymen – one a Church of Ireland Rector, the other a Roman Catholic priest – which has been launched in Londonderry.

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'Forgiveness Remembers' was co-written by Fr Paul Farren and Archdeacon Robert Miller whose parishes adjoin one another on the edge of the Bogside. It was launched by the Republic's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney, and the author and peace-builder, Tony Macaulay, at an event in St Mary's College. The Britannia Concert Band, of which Archdeacon Miller is a member, helped provide entertainment at the event.

The book was born out of the friendship between its authors and explores the road which, they say, "has the potential to lead us out of the darkness of hate into the light of peace". Its chapters draw from the personal experiences of the authors and their communities, and focus on hate, pity, compassion, forgiveness, grace, peace and hope.

Archdeacon Miller says encounter and relationship are at the book's heart. "It isn't long but it has a depth that we hope will refresh those who are weary of carrying the burden of 'unforgiveness'. Forgiveness cannot be hurried, so be gentle with yourself on the journey."

Fr Farren says: "In the reality that we live in today, the often painful journey of forgiveness is the only key to a future of freedom and peace."

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Minister Coveney revealed at the book launch that he had read the book on the road from Stormont, where a session of inter-party talks had earlier broken up acrimoniously and without agreement. “You mightn’t realise it,” he said, “but what you have achieved here [in Derry-Londonderry] in the last 20 years or so is an inspiration to so many other countries who are struggling to find a way of helping communities to live with each other.

“Of course, the divisions in NI run deep,” Mr Coveney said, “and the political parties are trying to create an environment that can create grey areas between those divisions, and then expand those grey areas so that they become encounters – positive ones – that are challenging, that are difficult, but that create outcomes for a new generation that can write a very different story for Northern Ireland.”

The Minister hoped the book would be a source of encouragement to people. “I think that [in terms of] the kind of aspiration and hope and determination that we need to have together for this city, this country, this island – both countries on this island – this book is a little gem in terms of helping people to think a little bit deeper about why they’re not able to come up to the challenges that they’re trying to face, and maybe

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help them to redouble their efforts and start again, to move through the journey that they need to do to find a much better place and to find their own peace of mind.”

Author and peace-builder Tony Macaulay told the audience of 150 people that 'Forgiveness Remembers' contained profound messages and offered important and inspiring words about the path to peace. Why, he wondered – in the midst of all the political talks, and the latest crises and deadlines here – was there so little talk of forgiveness? It was a concept that went to the very heart of the pain of a society emerging from conflict, he said. “Is it too hard, is it too religious, is it too ambitious, or too complex, or too personal to talk about forgiveness. Perhaps if forgiveness moved towards the centre stage in our peace process we might be able to take a leap forward to become a truly peaceful and integrated society.”

Mr Macaulay said the churchmen’s cross-denominational collaboration was, in itself, a model and an inspiration for reconciliation in this divided society.

The Bishop of Derry, Dr Donal McKeown, told the audience that the story we told about the past influenced, to a huge extent, the condition and

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possibilities of the future. “This subversive book is radical and liberating because it enables us to tell a different story of the past, to say we’re not its prisoners, that we can be architects of our future.”

Bishop Ken Good said there were many treasures in the book but that its main treasures were its two authors. “The two of you, as leaders of the church, are modelling something that is worthwhile.” Bishop Good said 'Forgiveness Remembers' was an accessible, significant and important volume for Northern Ireland.

Forgiveness Remembers, ISBN: 978-1-909728-67-7, by Paul Farren and Robert Miller, is published by Instant Apostle and is available from bookshops and on-line retailers. 128pp, £6.99.

C of I to develop prayer app

The Standing Committee of the General Synod met on Tuesday 20th June 2017 in Church of Ireland House, Dublin. The meeting was opened with a Scripture reading (Luke 20.19–26) and prayer by the Ven George Davison.

Tribute to Bishop Donald Caird

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The Archbishop of Armagh paid tribute to the late Bishop Donald Caird, formerly Bishop of Limerick, Bishop of Meath and Kildare, and Archbishop of Dublin. Archbishop Clarke recalled Bishop Caird's spiritual depth, rigorous integrity and very fast wit as well as his devotion to the Irish language. A moment of silence was observed as a mark of respect in his memory.

Constitution Review Group

Mr David Ritchie provided an update on the Constitution Review Group, which has been formed as part of the Long Term Church initiative, and confirmed that the group will report back to the 2018 General Synod.

General Synod

Members discussed the 2017 General Synod, held in the South Court Hotel, Limerick, from 4th to 6th May, and expressed appreciation to the Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Cllr Kieran O'Hanlon, and the General Synod Chaplain, the Very Revd Gary Paulsen, Dean of Killaloe. The Diocese of Limerick and Killaloe was thanked for arranging the Synod Service at St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick, and providing warm hospitality; this included packs for delegates from the Mayor's office and a welcome table at the hotel.

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The Honorary Secretaries noted a suggestion for the revision of the Bills procedure; work is ongoing on this issue and the Honorary Secretaries plan to introduce a discussion at the 2018 General Synod, for further legislation in 2019.

The 2018 General Synod will be held in the Armagh City Hotel, Armagh, from 10th to 12th May. The Standing Committee approved a request that the Honorary Secretaries seek a suitable venue for the 2019 General Synod in the Londonderry City area and for the 2020 General Synod in the Dublin area.

Communications

The Honorary Secretaries conveyed the sincere thanks of the Church of Ireland Historical Society for approving a subvention to the society for the publication of *The Church of Ireland and its past: history, interpretation and identity*. The book will be published by Four Courts Press and members of Standing Committee were invited to attend its launch in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, on 20th October.

A grant of €20,000 from the General Synod Royalties Fund to the Central Communications Board was approved for the development of a Daily Prayer app for use on mobile devices. The

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app will be developed in consultation with the Liturgical Advisory Committee.

Appointments

The following members were appointed to the Church and Society Commission of the Church of Ireland: the Archbishop of Armagh (ex-officio), the Archbishop of Dublin (ex-officio), the Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe, Mr Ken Gibson (Honorary Secretary), Mr Neville Armstrong, Mrs June Butler, the Revd Rob Clements, the Revd Dr Rory Corbett, the Revd Matthew Hagan, the Very Revd Maria Jansson, the Revd Martin O'Connor, and the Ven Andrew Orr.

In relation to the Irish Council of Churches, the Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry was appointed to its Executive and the Revd Dr Adrian Empey and Ms Maxine Judge were appointed to its European Affairs Committee.

The Ven Brian Harper was appointed to the Commission on Ministry. The Archbishop of Dublin was appointed to attend the meeting of the Governing Body of the Church in Wales, to be held in Lampeter from 13th to 14th September.

The Bishop of Derry closed the meeting in prayer. The Standing Committee was given

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advance notice of its meetings in 2018 as follows: 23rd January; 13th March; 17th April; 19th June; 18th September (at 2pm); and 20th November.

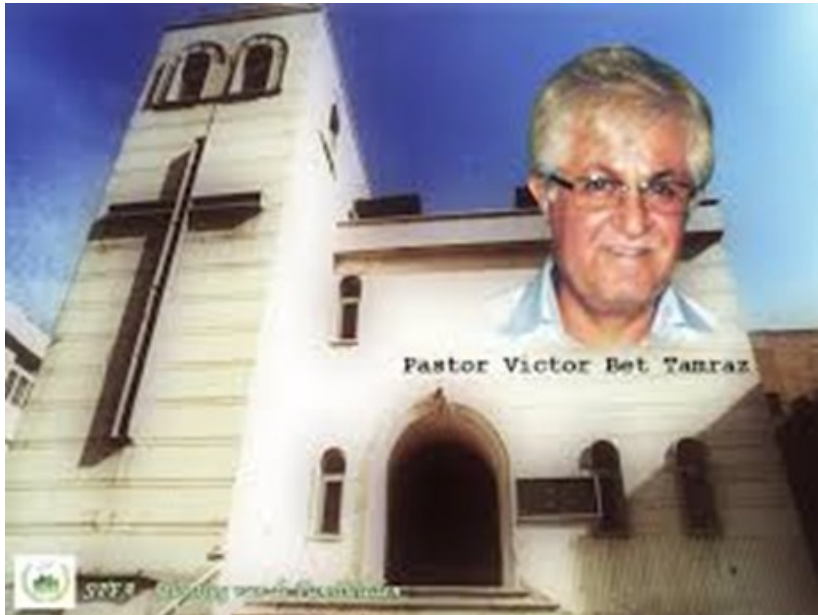
Three Christians in Iran given long jail terms

Two Iranian Christians, Pastor Victor Bet Tamraz and Hadi Asgari have been sentenced to 10 years in jail and a third, Amin Afshar Naderi, has been jailed for 15 years. Pastor Victor was verbally charged with "conducting evangelism," "illegal house church activities" and "Bible printing and distribution" among other charges. Amin Afshar Naderi, a convert from Islam, was charged with "acting against national security" and "insulting the sacred" (blasphemy).

The jail terms were imposed by a judge in Tehran following a hearing in June. The men were not in court when the sentences were read out. Their lawyer will appeal against the court's decision.

Pastor Victor, who is of Assyrian background, was seized at his home along with Naderi at a

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Christmas celebration in 2014. They were subsequently released on bail but Naderi was then re-arrested during a picnic last August along with Hadi Asgari and three others, including Pastor Victor's son. Hadi Asgari, also a convert, was charged with "acting against national security" and "organising and creating house churches".

Pastor Victor's son, Ramiel Bet Tamraz, was charged with "acting against national security" and "organising and creating house churches" as well as charges relating to his father's

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ministry. Pastor Victor's wife, Shamiran Issavi, was summoned by the authorities last month to Evin Detention Centre in Tehran and charged with "participating in foreign seminars" and "acting against Iranian national security" as a church member. She was released after one day on bail of approximately \$30,000.

Iranian Christians have requested prayers that the appeal judge will overturn the jail sentences and also acquit Pastor Victor's wife and son.

Kingdom explored at Dublin Kids' Camp

The Dublin & Glendalough Diocesan Kids' Summer Camp is currently taking place in the beautiful setting of the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation. The theme of this year's camp is 'Kingdom Lives' and children aged 10 to 12 from all over the dioceses are taking part.

They are looking at the call of Abraham, the ministry of John the Baptist and the call to be part of God's kingdom. Taking into account the camp's base this year, they will also be making

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space for a special focus on being peacemakers and reconcilers in their own lives.

Throughout the week they will be taking part in daily meetings and prayer groups interspersed with arts and crafts, team building exercises, games, quizzes and outings. There is also plenty of time to relax, hang out and make new friends while exploring their faith in God.

WCC urges end to escalation in Korea

The World Council of Churches has restated its urgent appeal issued by its Executive Committee in June for “all states engaged in the perilously escalating military confrontation in the [Korean] region to refrain from further escalation and to pursue instead initiatives to reduce tensions and to create a window for new dialogue initiatives.”

The reportedly successful intercontinental ballistic missile test by North Korea on 4 July, and the joint US-South Korean ballistic missile drills it provoked, have raised tensions in the region to a dangerously new high, according to Peter Prove, director of the WCC’s Commission of the Churches on International Affairs.

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As the WCC Executive Committee has recently observed", noted Prove, "confrontation by military or other means carries far higher risks of conflict – with catastrophic consequences for all people of the peninsula and the region – than prospects of leading to peace. A sustainable peace, and the peaceful denuclearization of the region, cannot be achieved through mutual provocation, but only through dialogue. In this particularly dangerous moment, self-restraint is indeed all that separates armistice and war. We call on all parties to beware of this perilous threshold."

Two C of E bishops welcome controversial 'missionary bishop'

Two Church of England bishops are welcoming a controversial 'missionary' bishop consecrated last week by a splinter Anglican church.

Rt Rev Julian Henderson, the Bishop of Blackburn, and Rt Rev Keith Sinclair, the Bishop of Birkenhead, wrote to the head of the Anglican Church of North America (ACNA) to say they were praying for a service where Andy Lines was made a bishop.

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Andy Lines has been told by the Archbishop of Canterbury his authority will not be recognised by the Church of England

The ceremony on Friday of last week has caused anger among Anglican hierarchy with the head bishop in Australia rebuking two of his bishops for attending the event.

Archbishop Philip Freier has 'deep concerns' about the participation of the Archbishop of Sydney and the Bishop of Tasmania in the service which he condemned as 'contrary to the spirit' of ancient church teaching.

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'The consecration in the ACNA is not on any view an act in communion with the Anglican Communion and its member churches, particularly the Provinces of the Church of England, the Scottish Episcopal Church and existing jurisdictions in Europe,' he wrote in a letter to fellow Australian bishops.

But that did not stop two CofE bishops writing their best wishes for the ceremony.

An email on Friday to Archbishop Foley Beach, head of the ACNA, read: 'We pray for you today, especially for Canon Andy Lines, consecrated as a bishop in the church of God. It has been good to meet and pray with Andy in recent years, and to know his heart for the gospel and the witness of the church. Please pray for us in the Church of England, for faithfulness and fruitfulness in these days.'

It comes after the Bishop of Maidstone Rod Thomas, another evangelical leader, also welcomed Andy Lines' appointment.

Describing the Scottish Episcopal Church's decision to permit gay marriage as 'very serious' he said: 'I therefore welcome the steps that GAFCON (the global fellowship of orthodox Anglicans) is taking to support those who are

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seeking to stand firm by the Bible's teaching on marriage and sexual relationships, and wish to assure Canon Andy Lines of my prayers as he becomes a missionary bishop.'

The move is likely to irritate the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and raise tensions ahead of the Church of England's general synod which meets this week in York.

Andy Lines will offer 'alternative oversight' to conservative Anglican parishes in Scotland, England and across Europe who feel disenfranchised with their official local bishop.

Anglican Mission in England (AMiE), one fringe body not part of the CofE who Lines will be offering leadership to, welcomed the appointment.

'There is an urgent need for new Anglican churches where the Gospel is proclaimed and many can embrace the life-giving rule of Jesus Christ,' a statement read.

'A new generation of Anglican church leaders is being identified, trained and sent out to share the good news of Jesus and bring people together in new local churches. These churches and their ministers require the support and

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example of missionary bishops who themselves both proclaim and defend the Gospel, and will encourage others to do the same.'

Lines said afterwards 'Part of my remit is to look after churches and leaders of church in Scotland, England and the rest of Europe who are maintaining an orthodox belief in the Christian faith as revealed to us in the scripture and to provide a home to them if they are not within the official structures of the churches there.'

Questions of sexuality and abuse to dominate Church of England synod

Sex and abuse dominate questions to bishops and senior church figures this evening (Friday) with the biannual meeting of the Church of England's General Synod beginning in York.

The four-day meeting will be overrun with issues around sexuality with calls for transgender renaming services for people who have transitioned and for the CofE to condemn gay conversion therapies as 'unethical, harmful' and having 'no place in the modern world'.

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In a Q&A session with senior Church figures on the opening evening of synod, sex is mentioned 32 times in 85 questions and issues around abuse and safeguarding another 18 times.

A debate around gay 'cure' therapies on Saturday evening is likely to cause controversy with conservatives saying no evidence exists that counselling to change sexual orientation is harmful.

But Jayne Ozanne, who tabled the motion that could see the Church sign up to a statement condemning the therapies as 'not supported by evidence', told Christian Today: 'It is incredibly important that religious organisations follow the clear lead set by the health care professions in standing against this highly damaging and unethical practice, which reinforces stigma and prejudice against the LGBTI community.

'The Bible teaches that we are each fearfully and wonderfully made, and we should therefore look to celebrate God's gift of diversity in creation not treat those of us who are non-heterosexual as having mental disorders that need to be "cured".'

Andrea Williams, a conservative member of synod and chief executive of the Christian

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Concern lobby group, asked the Bishop of Willesden whether such evidence of harm existed.

In written answers published on Wednesday he responded saying the evidence 'is elusive and what there is, is often ambiguous', adding: 'The key point is that when people are vulnerable they must be safeguarded from manipulation or exploitation by anyone with an agenda of their own.'

The synod meets weeks after its Anglican partner in Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, passed same-sex marriage, raising tensions between the two bodies.

It also comes after a former Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, quit his role in the CofE following a damning report into the Church's handling of the case of convicted abuser Peter Ball, a former Bishop of Gloucester.

G20 leaders must show Trump that he stands alone on climate change, says Christian Aid

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As big economies gather in Hamburg for the first G20 meeting since Donald Trump announced his withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, Christian Aid has called on leaders to show the US President that he has relegated himself to the side-lines of climate change negotiations.

Mohamed Adow, Christian Aid's International Climate Lead, said: "The Trump Administration's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement has backfired. Far from undermining the Agreement, he has driven climate change to the top of the geopolitical agenda.

"Angela Merkel has made this G20 summit a test of leadership. We're seeing a new constellation of diplomatic leaders, led by China and Europe, coming together to form a progressive climate alliance. At this summit, Donald Trump must realise that he has walked away from the top table on an issue of major international importance – on climate change he stands alone.

"The best way for the remaining 'G19' to defend the Paris Agreement is to enact promises within it. Trump has made his choice:

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it's time for the other leaders to get down to business. By delivering on the pledges enshrined in the accord they will demonstrate its effectiveness, and have a fighting chance to stay on a safe course.

“The moment has now come for major economy leaders to shift gears from rhetoric to hard action and get on with the business at hand, towards a clean, sustainable and resilient global economy. Christian Aid wants to see leaders commit to making a big shift in the flow of global finance – away from dirty energy sources like coal, and towards green investment.

“This G20 also presents a test for Theresa May. Last month she gave only a soft slap on the wrist to Trump's reckless act: but with her international

CNI