

## The essential daily brief on the Irish churches

### Rugby star reluctant to discuss faith

**Ulster and Ireland winger Andrew Trimble, one of the world's most prominent Christian rugby players, has explained why he is now not so keen to publicly discuss his faith.**



*Andrew Trimble scores for Ulster against Connacht during Friday night's RaboDirect Pro 12 match at Ravenhill. Picture by Brian Little*

News Letter - The Coleraine-born sportsman said that he had been “pigeonholed” due to speaking candidly about beliefs which are so strong that he studied at Bible college while beginning his rugby career.

The 29-year-old, who is at the peak of his game, scored a try in Ireland's Six Nations-winning victory in Paris last month, and on Friday night scored his first ever hat-trick for Ulster.

Appearing on RTE's The Saturday Night Show at the weekend, Trimble said that he had “even forgot to smile” when he scored the try against France due to the pressure of the game, but “looking back, it was a pretty special moment for me”.

Later in the interview, RTE talk show host Brendan O'Connor said to Trimble, whose career has taken off after a period out of the international team: "I know you don't want to talk about religion; you've talked about it a lot in the past and you're not keen to talk about it, but I'm just thinking that when a turnaround like that [in your career] happens, your faith must play a part in it as well, does it?"

The rugby star replied: "Yeah, I think it does.

"You know, I think my faith gives me a little bit of perspective and I don't think it's really a part of playing well or playing badly. I think it's just something that fits in around whatever condition your career's in at the time.

"I think it just gives you a bigger picture and helps you remember that rugby isn't the end of the world.

"I think that's something that's quite healthy for me."

Asked if he didn't like to talk about his faith as much because he felt people were stereotyping him as "a kind of 'holy Joe' character", Trimble said: "Yeah, I think I got pigeonholed a little bit.

"You know, I bump into people and they think I want to be a priest."

Laughing, the former Coleraine Inst pupil added: "And I don't want to be a priest.

"So that's the image I think I got and I probably wouldn't really suit."

Trimble, who has been capped more than 50 times for Ireland, began a physics course at Queen's University before leaving it to take up Theology at Belfast Bible College, and has often spoken in interviews about his Christian faith.

Addressing a large Christian event in Belfast's Odyssey Arena which was organised by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in 2008, Trimble said: "For me there's nothing more exciting than talking about Jesus and that's something that excites me a lot more than rugby."

## **5,000 Lives take part in Passion For Life In Coleraine**

**More than 1,000 people queued up to be part of an audience with PSNI Chief Constable Matt Baggott when he joined the Passion for Life Mission in Coleraine, Diocese of Connor.**

The Chief Constable was the special guest at the opening night of the week of mission which got underway on Sunday 6 April. St Patrick's Parish in the heart of Coleraine was the centre for this mission initiative which involved 14 local churches.



***Revd Robert McMullan interviews the Chief Constable Matt Baggott***

Passion for Life brought the Christian message to thousands of people with

celebrities and members of the local community stepping up to talk about what God has done in their lives.

The Revd Roger Cooke, rector of St Patrick's said: 'The 14 churches came together for the week and during the Sunday evening we had to turn people away when Matt Baggott visited.'

'Over the week I'm sure at least 5,000 people got involved with Passion for Life.'

Mr Baggott, who is President of the Christian Police Association, was interviewed by the Revd Robert McMullan, of New Row Presbyterian Church in Coleraine, and he spoke very openly about his faith and how much he has enjoyed working in Northern Ireland.

He later spoke to people in the mission's overflow facility – the Xtra-time café in the former Xtravision building.

Another high profile guest during Passion for Life was Dave Blevins, the Sky News' Ireland. Since 1996 he has reported from 10 different countries worldwide, has been nominated for an RTS Award for his coverage of the Omagh bombing in 1998 and he has also gained a first class BA Hons in Applied Theology.

Dave spoke to Shirley Alexander, wife of the Revd Greg Alexander of the Methodist Church, and revealed that although he has interviewed two American presidents, three British Prime Ministers, two Irish Prime Ministers and two Presidents, he reckoned the most influential and exceptional people were the ordinary folk who were able to forgive those who had killed their loved ones during the Troubles.

Also speaking during the week was Elaine Price, from Belfast, a former drug addict and alcoholic who had been caught up with the paramilitaries but whose life changed when she found Jesus.

On the Wednesday, local artist, Ross Wilson spoke about the people who had led him to faith, the international celebrities he had met in his creative life and the cross-community work he was doing.

The following evening Averil Neily, whose husband, a cancer surgeon, diagnosed himself with the cancer he'd treated in so many others, told a moving story of grief, grace and glory.

The Friday events included a family evening with St Patrick's Family Worker Alice McAlary and Howard Beverland talking to young people about the difference God makes in his life.

The main speaker each evening was Pete Woodcock of Cornerstone Church, London, who spoke from John's Gospel about Jesus' claim that He came that we might have 'life in all its fullness.'

During the week there was also a range of musical performances, food and an art exhibition in the café featuring work by Sarah Carrington ('Pilgrimage'), Ross Wilson, Mark Bell and Gilbert Lennox.

Reflecting a hugely successful week of mission, Roger said: 'Passion for Life is just the start of an ongoing partnership with all the churches.'

## **Children killed in 1916 Rising remembered**

**Dublin voices commemorated the Dublin dead on Sunday past, as 40 children from the City Quay Primary School each held up a sign with the name of a child killed in the Easter Rising of 1916.**

Irish Times - The dead children are, as Minister for Children and Youth Affairs [Frances Fitzgerald](#) put it in her speech, "still missing from the pages of 1916".





***Students from Dublin City Quay primary school take part in a commemoration for the 40 children killed in the 1916 rising.***

Families of 15 of the dead children gathered at the Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in City Quay yesterday, under statues properly shrouded in Lenten purple.

“He got shot! He got shot!” said the children when asked at the remembrance service about what happened to their 1916 equivalents.

Kirsten Whelan held a sign which said simply: “Male O’Toole, 14.”

While she didn’t know what had happened to him, she pointed out that she is friendly with a boy her own age called O’Toole.

Like a lot of the children in the south inner city school, Kirsten lives in the Markievicz flats, named after the Countess Constance Markievicz, who took part in the insurrection.

Broadcaster [Joe Duffy](#), the guiding hand behind the service, says its purpose is “just to remember and reclaim”. Duffy spent his spare time in the last year trawling records and has documented the deaths of 40 people under 17 among the 374 civilians who were killed during the Easter Rising.

It was all about the names at the City Quay church in Dublin yesterday. The ecumenical service was celebrated not just by the Rev Pearse Walsh, parish priest of City Quay, who described his participation in the event as “a delight”, but also by Canon Barbara Fryday, relative of Neville Fryday (16) who was killed wearing his Canadian army uniform on Easter Monday 1916;

and by Fr Michael Scott Patrick Fetherston, the nephew of Water Scott (8), who was killed in East Wall.

More at -

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/children-killed-in-1916-rising-remembered-1.1757855>

## **Methodist ecumenical canon in Belfast**

**St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, has now two ecumenical canons by the name of Ruth Patterson!**

This follows the appointment by the Dean and Chapter of St Anne's of the Rev Ruth Patterson as a Methodist ecumenical canon in succession to the Rev Brian Fletcher who has retired.

The Presbyterian ecumenical canon is also Ruth Patterson! Director of Restoration Ministries, the Rev Dr Ruth Patterson OBE was installed in the Cathedral in October 2012.

The Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev John Mann, said: "I was delighted by Ruth's appointment at the election last Wednesday morning, and I am quite certain that she will contribute to the life of the cathedral from her experience of serving Methodist congregations in Belfast and in ecumenical endeavours. We look forward to her installation in due course"

Ruth currently serves as the Methodist minister in Ballynafeigh Church, Ormeau Road, Belfast, and is Superintendent of the Ballynafeigh Circuit. Previously she served as a non-stipendiary minister in Donegall Road Church, Belfast.

In both these positions Ruth worked closely with colleagues in other church traditions in particular through the Ballynafeigh Clergy Fellowship and the sharing of evening services with St Simon and St Philip's Church in Donegall Road.



Ruth was educated at Fivemiletown High School and Methodist College Belfast. On leaving school she trained as a Diagnostic Radiographer at the Royal Victoria Hospital Belfast where she later worked as a clinical radiographer, eventually specialising in neuroradiography, before moving to a lecturer's post at the University of Ulster.

In 2004 she received a Bachelor of Theology from Queen's University Belfast, and was ordained in 2006. She is married to Ian and they have two grown up sons.



## **Hallelujah for singing priest as he takes new-found fame in his stride**

**A Meath priest who has become an internet sensation overnight has taken his new-found fame in his stride.**

Irish Examiner - Known locally as the singing priest, Fr Ray Kelly's version of the Leonard Cohen hit Hallelujah performed at a local wedding clocked up almost 2.5m hits on YouTube.

The Oldcastle parish priest brought newly-weds Leah and Chris O'Kane to tears after he surprised them from the altar with a personalised version of the song — containing their names — during the ceremony. After his rendition

brought the shocked wedding guests to their feet for an ovation, he calmly returned to the pulpit to deliver the final prayer.

Since the video went viral, a different clip has also been uploaded to Facebook of a wedding where Fr Kelly sang the Westlife hit, You Raise Me Up, to another couple.

Yesterday, while preparing for a local funeral, he said: "I'm taking it all in my stride.

"Leah and Chris sent me an email to thank me and to tell me I was on YouTube. I think I've gone into YouTube twice in my life so I clicked on the link to see what it was all about and saw it had been viewed 8,000 times. More at -

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/hallelujah-for-singing-priest-as-he-takes-new-found-fame-in-his-stride-264902.html>

## 66 People Now Better Prepared to Go!

**Very positive feedback has been received following last Saturday's '*Prepared to GO?!'* training day, designed to help prepare teams and individuals who are going overseas soon to engage in short-term mission.**

66 participants, from a variety of denominations, were able to choose from a wide range of seminar topics, including: Personal Security, Cross-Cultural Awareness, Staying Healthy Spiritually and Sharing Your Story - Home and Away.

There were also specific seminars for team leaders.

Each year, especially during the summer months, over a dozen 'Presbyterian' mission teams go overseas; either sent centrally or by presbyteries or congregations.

These teams go to different areas of the world, where they connect with local Christians to do a variety of work, including:





- Children's and Youth Outreach
- Building Work
- Practical Projects
- Leadership training

This is what some of the participants, who attended last Saturday's **'Prepared to Go?!'** training event, had to say about their experience:

*"Excellent training - thank you so much."*

*"I thought all the topics were very useful! Personal Security [Seminar] was very practical (hopefully will not be need in practice!)"*

*"Great to sharing experience with teams going to other countries"*

*"Having attend the training day previously, it was good to be reminded of the main aspects on a wide variety of topics."*

**'Prepared to Go?!'** was organised and run by PCI's Board of [Mission Overseas](#), supported by the [Mission Agencies Partnership](#).

## Children First Bill makes reporting of child abuse mandatory in Ireland

The Children's Minister Frances Fitzgerald has published landmark legislation making the reporting of child abuse mandatory for named professions.



Irish Examiner - Under the Children First Bill, clergy members, teachers, gardaí and medical practitioners will be legally obliged to report any suspicions of abuse or neglect they may have.

Ms Fitzgerald says the Government will look at funding cuts to organisations who fail to fully implement the measures. Minister Fitzgerald says the legislation is a huge step forward for child protection.

