



Packed Newry event is told about the impact of the IRA campaign in border areas

An Orange hall in Newry was filled to capacity for an event this week to discuss the republican terror onslaught on unionist border communities, the New Letter reports.

Tuesday's meeting, at the RL Mitchell Memorial Hall, was addressed by Professor Henry Patterson, who has written a book about Troubles violence at the frontier between Northern Ireland and the Republic.

Professor Henry Patterson speaks to the audience at the RL Mitchell Memorial Hall in Newry, where he discussed the one-sided narrative on legacy, and the difficulties the British had getting Irish co-operation to stop terrorism during the Troubles

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Rev Alan Irwin speaks about the murder of his father and uncle

The gathering, entitled 'A Border Between Truth and Justice – an Evening of Reflection,' was opened by Rev Norman Hutton, who told the story of Robert Mitchell, the anniversary of whose 1977 murder was on Tuesday.

Mr Mitchell, after whom the Orange Hall is named, was a businessman and JP killed by the IRA. Rev Hutton recounted how two gunmen took his sisters hostage until he returned late one evening, and shot him in front of them. Prof Patterson talked about his book, about the difficulties the British authorities had faced in receiving Irish co-operation to try to stop terrorists using the Republic as a base, and about the one-sided nature of the legacy narrative.

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Even now, he said, many references to the border in relation to Brexit failed to acknowledge the security reasons why the border was so policed during the Troubles.

Rev Alan Irwin, whose father and uncle were both murdered by the IRA, told the audience his personal story. He previously addressed the Ulster Unionist conference, where he was scathing about planned legacy structures and those who have “declared evil good, good evil”. Similar events are planned for other locations.

A home for every child who needs one - Methodist President

Commenting on a recent engagement, Rev Billy Davison, President of the Irish Methodist Church said, “During a reception on Tuesday for the work of ‘Home for Good’, I heard about the vision they share of finding a home for every child who needs one. “We want every child to have a stable, loving home where they can thrive.” Some people present shared how their adopted parents and family had provided so much love and security for them throughout their life, and adoption had been a great blessing to them. As Christians we too have had the amazing privilege of being adopted into the family of God through Jesus Christ who imparts faith, hope and love into our lives. What a blessing!

"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His

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Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, Abba, Father." (Galatians Ch 4: 4 – 6.)

“Thank you for your on going prayers!

The President's schedule for the week ahead:

Sunday 3rd March: Antrim Methodist Church Anniversary Service.

Belfast South Memorial Service for late Rev Dr Stanley McQuade.

Monday 4th: Meetings in Belfast

Tuesday 5th: Launch of 'Care to Share' Training Manual DVD

North East District Synod

Wednesday 6th: Pastoral Visits

Thursday 7th: Home Office

Friday 8th: Day of Reflection

Saturday 9th: Day Off

Relentless North Belfast 2019 gets underway

Relentless North Belfast 2019 gets underway on March 6, with 26 churches and organisations coming together to cover the Lent season in prayer for North and West Belfast.

A launch event will take place in St Stephen's, Millfield at 6.45pm on Sunday March 3. Speaker will be the Ven George Davison, Archdeacon of Belfast, and there will be

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Activity in a Prayer room during Relentless North Belfast 2018.

time to pray and worship together to launch this season of prayer.

Everyone is welcome to attend, whether involved in Relentless or not.

Prayer spaces will be open from March 6 for anyone to drop in, slow down and be in the Father's presence. Details of times, dates and locations will follow.

This is the second year Relentless Prayer, co-ordinated by Connect Base and the Church of Ireland Lower Shankill Ministry Team, has run in North Belfast.

churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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Scouting Ireland seeks 'urgent engagement' with Tusla

Katherine Zappone said she will be meeting the chief social worker in her department to consider the next steps, RTE reports.

Scouting Ireland says the Child and Family Agency, Tusla, has never before raised at meetings between the two bodies what it calls the "most serious allegation" that "the actions of key (Scouting Ireland) personnel holding a role in safeguarding may have been compromised".

It says it is seeking urgent engagement with the statutory body to help it understand why Tusla has made the allegation.

It adds that Scouting Ireland "would have responded to (it) immediately, had we known or understood Tusla's concerns. It has not been raised in any of our meetings with Tusla."

It comes after Tusla told Scouting Ireland that it should consider the viability of continuing with overnight trips. Minister for Children Katherine Zappone said this evening that parents should seek assurances that no overnight trips take place without adequate numbers of trained supervisors, who know the exact steps to take if a child comes to them with a concern.

Tusla has highlighted serious concerns about child protection procedures in Scouting Ireland, Ms Zappone told the Dáil.

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She said the agency has recommended an immediate review of the supervision of children involved in scouting, and has stated that consideration should be given to the viability of continuing with overnight scouting trips.

Ms Zappone told the Dáil that "in recent days Tusla has written to Scouting Ireland highlighting serious concerns about that organisation".

The minister published the contents of the letter this evening.

Archbishops of Dublin visit desecrated St Michan's Crypt

Both the Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic Archbishops of Dublin issued an appeal for the return of the head of an 800 year old mummy which was stolen during a raid at St Michan's Church, Dublin, at the weekend.

Archbishop Michael Jackson and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin spoke following a visit to the crypt of St Michan's Church this morning where they surveyed the damage done during the break in. They were joined by Assistant Garda Commissioner Pat Leahy.

The perpetrators forced their way into the crypt and moved parts of the remains of the mummy known as 'the Crusader'. They scattered some of his bones outside his coffin and stole his head along with a skull which was also to be found in the crypt. They also moved the remains of two other people, including a nun who has lain there for 400 years. At

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**Archbishop
Michael
Jackson and
Archbishop
Diarmuid
Martin outside
the sealed off
crypt of St
Michan's
Church, Dublin.**



the same time the intruders broke into the family vault of William Rowan Hamilton, the 19th century mathematician whose studies paved the way for quantum theory.

On emerging from the crypt, Archbishop Jackson described the damage as “barbaric” and “significant” and spoke of the overwhelming support the parish has received from the local community since the break in.

“I would like to thank all members of the community for their support and appeal to them to keep their eyes open in case the head of the Crusader has been dumped,” he said before appealing for its return. “On its own the head is useless. But it will mean so much to the people of Dublin to have it restored to its resting place. I want to assure people that I will return here to reconsecrate the crypt. It is right to reconsecrate an area that has been desecrated,” he stated.

He expressed his concern that once out of the microclimate of the crypt, the mummified remains would quickly disintegrate.

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Archbishop Martin also described the act as desecration. “As a Dubliner, this is an offence against the city. All Dubliners know about St Michan’s. This is so sad. We have to find a way to restore harmony. I appeal for the return of the Crusader’s head but I am worried about the damage they did – I wonder about the mentality behind it,” he said. When asked about forgiveness, Archbishop Martin said that to be forgiven a person must ask for forgiveness and say sorry. Archbishop Jackson added that restoration of the head would be a start.

Archbishop Jackson added that within the Dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough St Michan’s Church is very important. It is dear to the hearts of many, those who work in the areas, those who come to worship in the church and those who gather at the beginning of each legal year, he stated. “Part of the heritage of this place that we have to share is the uniqueness of the mummified bodies in the crypt. I thank the Vicar and the Dean of Christ Church Cathedral, who is the Rector, and the parishioners for their custodianship and their patience. I stand with them in the hope that it will be restored,” he said. While St Michan’s Church remains open for regular parish worship, the tours and access to the crypt have been suspended.

Protestant numbers halved in Germany

In Germany, the crucible of the Reformation 500 years ago, the country’s former Protestant majority now makes up less than a third of the population.

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A recent study at the University of Münster tracks religious trends since 1950. Between 1950 and 2010, membership of the Catholic Church has dropped from 37 per cent to 30 per cent, but the major Protestant churches have seen their proportion halved from 59 to 29 per cent (a further 30 per cent were unaffiliated). This figure is itself flattering, because it reflects formal church membership rather than activity, and the trend since 2010 has been downward.

One reason for the steep decline in Protestant church membership is German reunification in 1990. The new eastern states were formerly Protestant strongholds, but after 40 years of communist repression, religious affiliation in the east is extremely low – only 12 per cent attend church at least once per month, compared with 22 per cent in the west. But the trend in the west is sharply downwards too, especially among Germans under the age of 45.

By almost all measures, the Protestant churches are in a less healthy state than German Catholicism. Protestants are less likely to attend church services, less likely to say religion is important in their lives, less likely to agree with their church's moral teachings, and more likely to embrace New Age practices such as astrology. But this does not mean that German Catholicism is healthy – just that its decline has been slower, partly due to its history as a beleaguered minority.

The trend is even more obvious in the neighbouring Netherlands, where Catholics are now the largest religious group, despite dropping from 40 per cent in the 1960s to below a quarter today – because the once dominant Protestant churches have slumped to less than a sixth of the

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population. Only the small ultra-conservative Calvinist churches in the rural Dutch Bible belt, which are proudly counter-cultural, are holding their own.

The collapse of Protestant Europe in the past 50 years is an ominous sign of what could happen to Catholic Europe in the future, if long-term trends continue.

Female Anglican voices to be heard at United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

Members of the Anglican Communion chosen to be part of the official delegation to the UN's Commission on the Status of Women CSW63 meeting: From left-to-right and top-to-bottom: Jennifer Allen, Anatolie Dusabe, Ley-Anne Forsyth, Tomie Kaneko, Anika Kingmele, Nontlantla Mashiyane, Grace Ofori-Abebrese, and Ruihana Paenga. Anatolie Dusabe, from the Anglican Church of Burundi, will not attend CSW63 as her application for a US entry visa has been refused

The Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations is taking a delegation of seven women to New York next month for the 63rd annual meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63). Eight women were chosen, but one member of the delegation was denied a visa by the US authorities. This year, the 45 UN Member States who are members of the Commission will discuss

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“Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls” – this includes issues such as access to health and education systems. As in recent years, the US-based Episcopal Church will also have an official delegation at the event.

The Anglican mission agencies Mothers’ Union and USPG will also be present.

Anatolie Dusabe from the Anglican Church of Burundi, is Diocesan President of the Mothers’ Union in Rumonge. Her entry visa to the US was refused. Dusabe, had been looking forward to networking “with colleagues with experience in advocating for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls”. Before her visa was application was rejected, she said. “It will be a time for

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learning and to see how I can implement the knowledge back in my country and in my diocese.”

She added: “violence leads young ladies to abandon school, to conceive undesirable pregnancies, to become HIV / Aids positive, despair themselves and suffer from a lot of socio-economic miseries.”

She said that going to the CSW would have been “an opportunity to share a plan to empower women, especially young ladies, to be able to minimise victims of violence and to overcome such pain.”

The official Anglican Communion delegation includes *Jennifer Allen*, who attended previous CSW meetings as part of the official delegation from the *US-based* *Episcopal Church*. “I am particularly excited about the opportunity to network with women from all over the world”, she said. “I am excited to learn about the barriers other women face and what initiatives are being implemented around the world to address those barriers.

“I hope to bring some level of expertise from prior experience with CSW, having served as a representative for the Episcopal Church in 2016 and 2017. I also have knowledge and perspective about women’s access to support services, particularly women’s health care, as a result of working as a nurse in women’s healthcare and in relationships built with women in Kenya.”

Scottish Episcopal Church member Ley-Anne Forsyth, a housing professional, is another Anglican Communion delegation member. “I’m really looking forward to having an

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opportunity to hopefully engage with the UK government mission and pick up on the issues raised by Philip Alston, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, on his recent visit to the UK about our failing social protection systems, particularly around welfare support failings for women.

“I am keen to learn more and feed in to discussions around housing-centric policies for support and care for women and families. As a Youth Officer in the Scottish Episcopal Church I am looking forward to learning from groups and my fellow delegates ways in which I can help empower our young women to achieve everything they set their minds to.”
Anglican Communion delegation member

Tomie Kaneko from the Nippon Sei Ko Kai (NSKK) – the Anglican Communion in Japan – said: “I am excited to meeting new Anglican friends from all over the world! Attending is a great opportunity, I want to learn and bring back to Japan the trend of the gender equality and the empowerment of women.

“NSKK believe the nuclear power is not a right answer for the sustainable infrastructure.” She referenced the eight-year wait for a solution to the Fukushima power plant disaster, when a tsunami caused a meltdown in a nuclear power plant. “From our experience, I want to say: ‘no more nuclear power’”.

Another Anglican Communion delegation member, **Anika Kingmele from the Anglican Church of Melanesia**, said that she is “keen to learn from other countries progress in social protection programmes in breaking the glass ceiling

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and the role of faith-based organisations in empowering women and girls.

“I hope to contribute critical aspects of the Melanesian culture, political, social and economic factors that contribute both positively and negatively on the interventions that aim at attaining gender equality.”

The delegation includes a priest from the **Anglican Church of Southern Africa, Nontlantla Mashiyane**. “I am looking forward to learning about what other governments around the world are doing to achieve development that is inclusive of women and girls, especially those who are most vulnerable, especially in rural areas”, she said. “I look forward to being a part of women who are the agents of change globally.

“Women are the face of poverty in Africa. They have to contend with the challenges brought about by social and economic inequalities of our society on a daily basis. Outreach programmes targeting rural women should be prioritised. Their condition could be ameliorated by the provision of assistance mainly in the areas of education and health care.

“In this way, the theme of sustainable infrastructure and social protection systems is critical to the empowerment of women.”

Economist and Policy Analyst **Dr Grace Ofori-Abebrese, from the Church of the Province of West Africa**, is another member of the Anglican Communion delegation. “I am actually thrilled for being part of the delegation for

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CSW63”, she said. “This is my first time of joining members of the Anglican Communion around the world in such an important programme.

“I trust I am going to learn many things to equip me help the community of West Africa.”

She added: “I hope to contribute immensely to important issues concerning public financing of some of these social intervention programmes. I am expecting to throw light on areas that seem challenging in their implementation.”

The final member of the Anglican Communion delegation is **Ruihana Paenga, a member of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia**. She says that she will be sharing the /Mana Wahine/ – a Maori phrase for a spirit of womanhood – with the other members of the Anglican delegation. “I come to share with my Anglican sisters, Mana Wahine, a model of female leadership ingrained from the many women who have shaped and influenced my life”, she said, adding: “I hope to bring to CSW an insight to Pacific Priorities on Climate Change and Youth Empowerment which are underpinned by indigenous values & development frameworks.”

Tribute to Professor David Fitzpatrick

Jeffery Dudgeon writes - Sadly, yesterday I attended the funeral eucharist for David Fitzpatrick at St George's parish church in Belfast's High Street.

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He was a TCD Professor of Modern History and a celebrated author, not least of a biography of Louis McNeice's Bishop father.

Some controversially saw him as the eminence grise of contemporary Irish history.

David's wife, Jane Leonard, was the intercessor and detailed a long list of those people who had helped David and his family in the many months of his distressing illness.

His two young daughters Hannah and Julia read poems by Yeats and McNeice.

The preacher was his friend and student Father Tom Layden SJ. Former TCD Senator Sean Barrett was present having advised me of the time and place of the service. There was a large turnout, especially from the worlds of history and literature.

Afterwards I talked to Fergus Hanna Bell who told me his father's Scottish immigration novel 'Across the Narrow Sea' was being dramatised for radio. (Belfast is blessed in having two great 20th century novelists Brian Moore and Sam Hanna Bell.)

Edna Longley, there with husband Michael, spoke of her hopes for an art gallery in downtown Belfast. I indicated it was still an option but only just.

It was good to see and chat with Kevin Myers, Paul Clark, Feargal McGarry, Brian Walker, Margaret O'Callaghan,

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Tommy Graham, George Woodman, and Graham and Elda Walker.

David's book on Ernest Blythe was finished late last year despite his difficulties.

After the wicker coffin left for Roselawn, I walked through the sunny streets of Belfast to City Hall with another Trinity Professor of History, Eunan O'Halpin. This lifted spirits somewhat.

At the City Hall, I gave him my personal tour of the building and we ended up conversing with Alderman Chris McGimpsey about left Republicans of the 1920s and 30s.

News briefs

###The Rev Canon Malcolm Ferry - will be instituted as rector of Agherton Parish at a service in the Church of St John the Baptist on Friday May 10 at 4pm.

+++First female bishop in Cumbria consecrated - The Rt Rev Dr Emma Ineson is the new Bishop of Penrith in the Diocese of Carlisle. She was consecrated during a two hour service presided over by the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, attended by more than 160 people from Cumbria. Rt Rev Sarah Clark was also consecrated as Bishop of Jarrow in the Diocese of Durham. Bishop Emma said: "It's been a wonderful day. It's been very special to worship with everyone, listen to a fantastic sermon and hear all those voices singing praise to God."

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###Bishop Colton on Ashton school visit - During a visit to Ashton School, Cork yesterday to attend a reception hosted by the Board of Management, I was pleased to take the opportunity to pay tribute to the late James Barber who died in November 2018. James Barber served on the Board of Management of Ashton in the early days of the foundation of the school, from 1976 until 1999. I had the pleasure of serving with him when I arrived first as Bishop. In this photograph with me are (centre) James' daughter, Amanda Welch who serves on the Ashton Board today, and (right) Mr Ted Owens, recently retired as CEO of the Cork Education and Training Board (Co-Patron with me of Ashton School).

+++Mothers Union aids soldier - After describing himself as 'broken', a soldier was able to benefit from our 'Away from it all' Scheme. Whilst away, he was able to feel the

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presence of God and began to make positive life changes.

[https://www.mothersunion.org/news/soldier-neils-afia-journey ...](https://www.mothersunion.org/news/soldier-neils-afia-journey...)

+++Methodist President visits Portaferry - "Lorraine and I were delighted to meet Rev Jordon Litchfield and family who are stationed in Glastry & Portaferry on the Down District. Thank you to Jordon & both congregations for their warm welcome and fellowship. We pray God's blessing as they continue to witness for Christ across the community" commented Rev Billy Davison

###Food for Thought - We forget so quickly that we are God's beloved children and allow the many curses of our world to darken our hearts. Therefore we have to be reminded of our belovedness and remind others of theirs. Henri Nouwen Bread for the Journey

March 1 in Christian history

March 1, 589 (traditional date): David of Wales, whose ascetic path of restraint earned him the love of all Wales (he is now the patron saint of that country), dies. His final words were, "Be joyful, brothers and sisters. Keep your faith and do the little things that you have seen and heard from me" .

March 1, 1546: After surrendering peacefully, George Wishart, an early leader of Scottish protestants and influential in the life of John Knox, who served in his personal body guard, is executed by Cardinal David Beaton, archbishop of St. Andrews.

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March 1, 1562: At the Massacre of Vassy, French Protestants (called Huguenots) are killed by Roman Catholics. The action set off a series of eight religious wars that lasted 36 years.

March 1, 1854: Pioneer missionary Hudson Taylor lands in Shanghai, China. "My feelings on stepping ashore I cannot attempt to describe," he wrote. "My heart felt as though it had not room and must burst its bonds, while tears of gratitude and thankfulness fell from my eyes." Taylor would found the China Inland Mission in 1865, and he popularized the idea that missionaries should live and dress like the people they seek to evangelize.

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