



Ababa New Life Choir in concert in Moira

New perspectives on ministry with children at Irish and GB network meeting

How to work with children who haven't heard the Christian story and the necessity for focusing on inter-generational rather than children's ministry alone – were the main issues discussed at a recent UK and Ireland Children's Ministry

Network Conference in Dungarvan, County Waterford.

Organised by the Reverend James Mulhall, the Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory's Children's Ministry Officer, this major three-day conference focused on how the challenges of nurturing children in the Christian faith could be met.

It was attended by 17 people involved in children's ministry from different faith traditions in Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales.

Ireland has it easier, the conference heard, in that it hasn't yet 'lost the generation that knows the story'.

"You've still got a bedrock of knowledge," Martin Payne of the Bible Fellowship Society stated, "whereas in England we've lost some of this. That's why have to think much bigger than children's ministry. It has to be about intergenerational ministry – working with parents and grandparents as well. The grandparents' factor is huge."

The term 'intergenerational ministry' cropped up repeatedly as did the value of Messy Church and Godly Play in engaging with families.

The need for ministry ‘to be more hands-on’ was also focused on as well as communicating with young people in a way that engages them.

Well-being of children was the focus of another workshop led Penny Fuller of the Methodist Church who spoke of a call in the UK for churches to do something about children’s mental health and to be in schools in some role to help.

Training college lecturers to be better able to communicate the Christian message to generations who ‘haven’t heard the story’ was also deemed vital.

The still-strong link in Ireland between school, church and parish was seen as a great asset by the assembly.

Delegates also visited the Cathedral centres of Kilkenny and Waterford to witness children’s ministry there.

“We were challenged at this conference to explore new perspectives and ways of working,” said James. “It came across that we are still looking at Sunday school ways of interacting with children whereas the emphasis is now on intergenerational faith contexts. It’s obvious that

while we may not know exactly how to get there we now have the vision of where we need to go.”

For more information, please visit the Church of Ireland Children's Ministry website:
www.cm.ireland.anglican.org



Abaana New Life Choir's visit a blessing to Moira parish

The Abaana New Life Choir put on a great showing of singing and dancing in front of a large audience at St John's Parish, Moira on Wednesday 1st March.

The choir, made up of 20 children from all over Uganda, performed a range of Uganda and English gospel songs accompanied with lively dancing and drums. The concert also included informative video clips showing how the work of Abaana is transforming lives in Uganda. Through this tour Abaana hopes to be able to sponsor another 300 children and rescue more children from the streets.

Speaking on the event Rector of St John's, Rev. Joanne Megarrel said, "What a wonderful experience it has been to welcome the Abaana New Life Choir to our church family in Moira! The host families where the children are staying have been as blessed as they have sought to be a blessing and the whole choir's infectious, joyous faith has been an inspiration to us all."

The choir arrived in Northern Ireland at the beginning of February and will be performing concerts throughout the UK and Ireland until the end of May. For more information on the choir concert dates go to www.abaana.org/choirdates

Armagh archbishops on Patrick the Exile

The Archbishops of Armagh, The Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke and The Most Revd Eamon

Martin, will speak on 'Patrick the Exile' in a lecture in Market Place Theatre, Armagh, on Thursday, 16th March 2017, at 1pm. The lecture will also feature a discussion with Tara Mills (BBC Northern Ireland).



Gifts of food and supplies were collected and delivered to the school

Carrigaline school's support for Cork Penny Dinners

To mark St Valentine's Day recently, the children of St Mary's Church of Ireland School

Carrigaline, County Cork, once again this year, brought in items for Cork Penny Dinners.

Cork Penny Dinners was founded during Famine times as a soup kitchen. These amazing people currently serve well over 1000 meals per week, compared to around 150 a week two years ago. Their aim is a simple one – to give everyone who calls to their centre a hot nourishing midday meal. In addition, their clients get sandwiches and fruit to take away as an evening meal. There's an open door and a warm welcome. Their volunteers come from all walks of life; nurses, truck drivers, scientists, general operatives, musicians, teachers, students, solicitors, unemployed people, retired people, clergy and so on. The volunteers are from many nationalities and have many different religions or none; but what they all have is empathy for their fellow human beings, a willingness to offer a hand in support .

‘Love your neighbour for St Valentine’s Day’ is an annual event for St Mary’s National School in Carrigaline.

A packed van full of dry goods and kitchen supplies were much appreciated by the hard working staff in the venerable and highly-respected Cork institution.



L-R The Principal Clerk to the General Assembly, Very Rev Dr John Chalmers, and Moderator of the General Assembly Rt Rev Dr Russell Barr.

Scots Moderator holds talks with PM on slavery and human trafficking

Moderator of the General Assembly, Right Rev Dr Russell Barr, held talks with Theresa May about human trafficking and slavery.

He and the Prime Minister discussed the thorny issues at a reception to [mark Shrove Tuesday at Downing Street.](#)

The Principal Clerk to the General Assembly, Very Rev Dr John Chalmers, also attended.

[View Theresa May's speech.](#)

Dr Barr will soon be visiting Kenya where he will tour projects backed by the Presbyterian Church of East Africa and the Church of Scotland.

His home church, Cramond Kirk in Edinburgh, supports the Turi Children's Project at St Andrew's Church.

The initiative helps children affected by the aftermath of HIV AIDS or displaced by political events in Kenya.

Turi Children's Project is working to build a centre where children can obtain food or school uniforms, enjoy games and recreation, get help with school work, advice and counselling.

Dr Barr will also visit a church called Kayole which has been twinned with Chalmers Ardler Church in Dundee since 2010.

Delegations from both churches have visited each other several times over the years. Members of Chalmers Ardler chose Kayole as a twinning partner because it both are designated Priority Areas, albeit with different challenges.

Kayole has more than 3,000 members and holds three services on a Sunday in English, Kishwahili and Kikuyu.



Pope Francis: pray for persecuted Christians this month

Pope Francis has called on Catholics to remember persecuted Christians who suffer around the globe in a video message outlining his prayer intentions for March.

Pope Francis asks viewers: “How many people are being persecuted because of their faith, forced to abandon their homes, their places of worship, their lands, their loved ones?”

The video then shows three Christians standing in a police line-up holding signs reading; “Orthodox”, “Catholic” and “Protestant”.

Pope Francis goes on to say that persecutors see no difference between Christians of different denominations and implored the faithful to remember persecuted Christians of all backgrounds in prayer and material help.

The video has been released [just days](#) after an estimated 150 Christian families fled the city of el-Arish in Egypt after a spate of attacks by suspected Islamic militants.

According to the Christian charity [Open Doors](#), approximately 215 million Christians experience high or extreme levels of persecution. The charity also claims that [North Korea](#) is the worst country in the world in which to be a Christian. The totalitarian nation was followed by Somalia and Afghanistan.

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C of I has right and duty to be in the market place of educational options, Bishop Burrows

Bishop Michael Burrows of Cashel & Ossory in his monthly letter comments on the duty and right of the Church of Ireland to be in the market place of educational options, about his role of 'encourager' as patron of schools.

Bishop Burrows writes - "Once again there is much talk in the wider public square of matters connected with school patronage, admissions policies, the role of the churches and parental choice. The Church of Ireland has long cherished its role as a partner in the delivery of education in this State. It sees its involvement as a privilege and a responsibility, partly the product of complex historical events and partly a manifestation of our commitment to faith – based education as a social good. In working with many stakeholders in the world of education, we aspire to contribute to wider society as well as upholding our own ethos and values, and we take care not to over – burden the schools with matters of sacramental preparation, as opposed to wider religious education, which more properly belong in the

actual parish setting. We recognise that educational provision in Ireland is in a state of flux, and we affirm that parents desire and deserve choice concerning the moral and indeed spiritual formation of their children. In short, we are happy to co exist with others in a veritable market place of educational options, but we affirm our duty and right to be there and we believe that the long evidence of history demonstrates that we have something distinctive and wholesome to offer.

Patron as ‘encourager’ and human presence

“I say all these things not simply because they are timely, but because much of my own life has again been occupied with schools, especially but of course not exclusively at primary level, in recent times. Boards of Management are busy, not only responding to the request of the Minister for submissions regarding matters of admission and governance, but also attending modules of ongoing training ably organised by the Revd Brian O Rourke. I myself have been occupied – and I do this every second year – in visiting every classroom of every national school of which I am patron. This I consider a really key aspect (and indeed a very pleasurable one) of my work as I encounter the vibrancy and the

questioning of school communities, both students and teachers, in their own context. Of course I attend the 'big' occasions in schools, the openings of new buildings and the dedications of extensions, but it is the routine visits which really bring me joy. At the time of writing I have been in sixteen of the twenty eight schools, and my hope is that, in addition to regular and invaluable encounters with the local clergy, every pupil in 'our' schools should personally encounter that mysterious being 'the Patron' at least four times during their primary school career.

"And that last sentence brings me to a curious observation about patronage, which on the face of it has nothing directly to do with ethos or characteristic spirit in 'denominational' terms. Eccentric and antediluvian our patronage system may be in the eyes of some, but humble experience has taught me that there is real value in the patron being an identifiable human being. VECs in their time, and more recently ETBs, along with other corporate patronage bodies, are in their way estimable things, but they are not human beings who can visit the schools and meet the children and know the staff at a human level. I can but be an inadequate patron, and in that role I know I have made mistakes, but yet there is something wholesome about being

available as an individual to school communities and Boards at least as an encourager. The role of patron can be a very formal thing, or it can be something of a flexible resource within the system, and I believe that those who exercise it have a responsibility to devote to it a good deal of their best energy. Critics will say that episcopal school patronage is either an anachronism or a distraction from the real task of mission. I have learned over the years that patronage is pastoral ministry too, and it is all about putting a human face into a role which could all too easily and using other models of governance become faceless.”

News briefs & Upcoming events

+++ Bishop on the air - Bishop Michael Burrows will feature on a Christian Media Trust programme on South East Radio at 8.30 p.m. next Monday night, March 6th. He will talk about his upbringing, parental influence, when he knew he had a vocation, the value of history, about becoming a bishop, what the first ten years have been like – and trains. The interview is with DCO Margaret Hawkins as part of this year’s March Musings series.

+++ Safeguarding Board seminars -

”Understanding the Vetting Process in the Faith

Sector - what you need to know." The Faith group of the Safeguarding Board of Northern Ireland are running two lunchtime seminars for Church leaders on:-

- 27 March 2017 in Wellington Presbyterian Church, Sourhill Road, Ballymena, BT42 2NB and

- 28 March 2017 in the Good Shepherd Centre, 511 Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 3GS.

Both seminars are free to attend and run from 12:30 - 2pm and lunch will be provided.

+++ Clogher Charities Information Event -

Over 100 parish representatives and some independent examiners attended a Charities Information Event held in Aghavea Parish Hall on the evening of Thursday 23rd February 2017.

Archdeacon Brian Harper welcomed everyone to the event and opened with prayer. Mr. Myles McKeown, Head of Compliance and Enquiries of the Charities Commission for Northern Ireland, gave a very clear power point presentation on running a charity in Northern Ireland – post registration. During the presentation there was an opportunity for people to ask questions.

+++ New print run of Rebel Prods - Due to the unprecedented success of the book Rebel Prods, the publisher, Ashfield Press, is going to

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print another 300 copies. A quantity will soon become available through our online bookstore here – <https://store.ireland.anglican.org/store/product/120/rebel-prods-the-forgotten-story-of> – so as soon as we receive more books, orders can be placed again. In the meantime, it may be of interest to note that Valerie's daughter, Dr Heather Jones, will be interviewed on the History Show, RTE Radio 1, on 5th March to discuss the book with Deirdre Nuttall. Furthermore, it will be reviewed by Sinead McCoole in History Ireland in the March/April issue. All Church of Ireland profits from the books sold to date through the online bookstore will be donated to the Irish Cancer Society.

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+++ New Principal Clerk for Church of Scotland - The Church of Scotland has announced the selection of the Principal Clerk Designate following a recruitment process which was completed earlier this week. The successful candidate is Rev Dr George Whyte, who is the current clerk to the Presbytery of Edinburgh. Dr Whyte has also been assisting as Depute to the current Principal Clerk since 2011. He will now

be presented to commissioners at the General Assembly in May as the preferred candidate, when they will be invited to confirm his appointment. The role of the Principal Clerk is to act as the Clerk to the General Assembly, which includes advising the Assembly and the Moderator on church law, practice and procedure. The Principal Clerk also supports the Moderator throughout the year as well as providing training courses and advice on church law and procedures to Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, ministers and other church bodies.