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Former Bishop of Liverpool receives knighthood for his Hillsborough work

The Former Bishop of Liverpool, James Jones, has received his knighthood for services to the families of the Hillsborough victims. He attended a ceremony at Buckingham Palace where he met with the Queen to receive his honour in person.

He was knighted in the 2017 New Year Honours for his work with the families and his fight for justice.

Bishop Jones, now assistant bishop in the Diocese of York, told the BBC his pride was "mixed with sadness" because of "that enduring sadness of the families who have continued to feel the loss of their loved ones at Hillsborough".

He said: "I got to know the families very well during the Hillsborough Independent Panel process. And over the years I've come to understand something of their pain.

"I think the families have shown extraordinary forbearance over the years as they have struggled to get people just to listen to them.

"So, in receiving this honour, I also salute their forbearance." The panel's report triggered investigations which led to the unlawful killing verdict for 96 football fans in the 1989 Hillsborough disaster.

God and Google? Faith and Facebook?

“Trusting technology in a post-truth world” is the theme of a seminar and workshop with Vinoth Ramachanda and Steve Stockman, which is being organised by Contemporary Christianity on Saturday 27 May.

The technological revolution of the past 20 years is still gaining pace - influencing how we buy goods and services, read newspapers, watch TV, listen to music, bank, use transportation and get new “Friends”!

Technology and artificial intelligence initiatives (AI) will be even more ambitious in the next 20 years with driverless cars, robots, more workerless factories, drone deliveries and research in biotechnology for the treatment, managing and prevention of diseases.

Leading international Christian leader and thinker Vinoth Ramachandra and local Presbyterian minister Steve Stockman will bring their different perspectives to the significant challenges, threats and opportunities we face.

What are the particular challenges to people of faith and the local/global Church?

Join us and be prepared to be provoked and challenged and to engage in discussion

Suggested contribution: £5.00

Bookings not essential but an email to info@contemporarychristianity.net would be helpful.

Saturday 27 May 10.00am to 12.30pm. (Tea/coffee/registration from 9.30am). Fitzroy Presbyterian Church Cafe Area, University Road, Belfast BT7 1HL

C of I and Methodist church joint progress highlights challenges Synod told

The report of the Covenant Council which oversees the outworking of closer co-operation between the C of I and the Methodist Church in Ireland, was presented to the C of I General Synod last week. The Very Revd Nigel Dunne proposed the report and outlined the work of the council over the last year.

He said work over the last year had brought out issues that have arisen in facilitating the operation of the interchangeability of ministry between the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church. The issues have raised questions as to

the extent ministries are interchangeable outside of direct ‘transfers’ of clergy from one polity to the other, Dean Dunne said.

Among the issues were the use of the Book of Common Prayer rite, the need for episcopal permissions, the involvement of Methodist Presidents in ordinations and vice versa and the question of stationing.

“Because these matters have come to light, the joint working party of six people referred to in the report has been constituted to work alongside the already existing group of church leaders from both traditions, the latter of which only meets once or twice a year. Because these issues have arisen as the reality of the historic decision of this Synod and the Methodist Conference in 2014 to allow for interchangeability ‘beds in’ there is significant and careful work by all involved to be done in the coming year,” he said.

He said that the Church of Ireland had failed to formally ratify the guidelines and protocols for partnerships and projects. He urged the Church of Ireland to move forward with urgency in drawing up a full set of ecumenical canons and other legislation to assist in building and

strengthening existing and new ecumenical relationships.

Seconding the report the Revd Barry Forde said that the issues were the scaffolding but they were not the building. He said that the purpose was mission to make the kingdom of Christ known to those around us. He highlighted the many initiatives in which the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church work together. He urged everyone to recognize the opportunity to work and grow together.

Speaking to the report, Gillian Kingston of the Methodist Church said she was emboldened by the word 'mission'. She said there were a number of Methodists involved in Church of Ireland committees but noted the absence of a Methodist on the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue. She highlighted other issues in the Covenant which needed to be picked up. She said religious chaplaincy at third level was under threat.

The Revd Peter Thompson (Armagh) said huge progress had been made on the Covenant Council but nothing had happened since the agreement on interchangeability of ministry. He said the many potential issues should not stop us moving forward in love.

The report was accepted. The motion on membership of the Covenant Council was approved and the motion encouraging congregations to celebrate John Wesley Day on May 24 .

One million pounds private loan to community groups hit by Stormont collapse

One million pounds is being offered as a loan to community groups across Northern Ireland during the Stormont.

The Building Better Futures initiative was envisaged before the collapse of powersharing.

And now it will be used to help charities and other organisations with unsecured loans of up to £25,000 for projects like building repairs.

Many voluntary organisations are struggling for official grants due to the lack of an agreed Stormont budget for this year, amid warnings some staff faced redundancy.

Paula Reynolds, chief executive officer of the Belfast Charitable Society, said the fund was a

lifeline for some and enabled groups to take greater responsibility for their financial futures.

She added: "We are doing this at a time when groups are finding it difficult to be sure that they are getting their funding from Government."

The scheme is being funded over the next five years by the Belfast Charitable Society, one of Northern Ireland's oldest charitable organisations, Building Change Trust and Ulster Community Investment Trust.

Organisations like the 174 Trust, which works with communities in **North Belfast**, are benefiting.

Ms Reynolds said the money had been a lifeline for some.

"It is a lifeline in many ways. It is a lifeline in that they are looking at their operations and taking a risk, albeit ... it is unsecured but it is looking at a different way of funding their work so it has been a lifeline for a couple of groups in North Belfast, 174 Trust and Jigsaw.

"But it is a way for us to invest at a time of uncertainty, to help to invest in the groups and the work that they are doing and to let them also

look at the way they are funding their projects and giving them another option and to look at where their funding is coming from as opposed to it maybe always being a grant.”

New Assistant Director of Music at Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork

The appointment is announced of Ms Phoebe Tak Man Chow from London as the new Assistant Director of Music at Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork. She will also play a key role in the new Diocesan Church Music Programme in the United Dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, which is due to begin next September.

The Dean of Cork, the Very Reverend Nigel Dunne, announcing the appointment, said *I am looking forward to welcoming Phoebe to the Cathedral's music team in early September and I am sure she will greatly enrich the Cathedral's rich and vibrant musical tradition and will bring much skill and experience to the new Diocesan Church Music Programme.*

Welcoming the announcement, the Bishop of Cork, Dr Paul Colton, said

This appointment, made by the Cathedral Select Vestry in partnership with the Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Board of Education, is an innovative re-configuration of a long-standing post. The Assistant Director of Music will be key to our new Diocesan Church Music Scheme which has been devised, and which will be formally launched in the autumn.

Phoebe Tak Man Chow was born in Hong Kong and educated at Harrogate Ladies' College, North Yorkshire, England, from 2004-2009. She first took up organ studies with Mr Adrian Selway in 2006, and subsequently served as a member in the chapel choir.

Due to her interest in Anglican church music and keyboard accompaniment, she read music and studied organ performance at the Royal College of Music in London where she completed a Bachelor of Music degree and a Masters of Performance degree, graduating with the Walford Davies Organ Prize. She received regular organ tuition from professor David Graham (London), Sophie-Véronique Cauchefer-Choplin (Paris), participated in masterclasses with Oliver Latry (Paris), Pieter van Dijk (Alkmaar) and many others. Besides organ studies, she has also completed harpsichord studies with Professor Robert Woolley (London), stylistic

studies (composition), historical studies, advanced aural studies, keyboard accompaniment, and sang in the RCM chorus.

The RCM organ department organises annual trips abroad, enabling students to widen their perspectives on the performance of foreign church music. In 2013 Phoebe was awarded the Flentrop Organ Scholarship to study at the Flentrop organ building company in the Netherlands where she practised pipe manufacturing, basic voicing, and tuning skills. To explore historical Dutch instruments in greater depth, she participated in summer courses held by the Prince Claus Conservatoire (Groningen) and the Haarlem International Organ Festival (Haarlem).

To date, Phoebe has held organ scholarships and assistant posts in London churches for six years, working with choral scholars and professional musicians. She currently holds the post of Music Assistant/Chapel Organist at the Emanuel School, London, where she teaches group sessions and serves as accompanist for all occasions.

Phoebe will take up the post of Assistant Director of Music on 1st September 2017.

Recognition by Clinical Pastoral Education body of Cork cleric

On Friday, 5th May, The Reverend Canon Dr Daniel Nuzum, Chaplain at Cork University Hospital, was presented with his certificate as CPE Teaching Supervisor.

The Association of Clinical Pastoral Education Ireland – ACPE (Ireland) Ltd – which is the professional interfaith body that provides Clinical Pastoral Education within a number of Accredited Centres throughout Ireland, had earlier ratified his appointment.

The certificate was presented by Ms Catherine Keenan (Chairperson of the Interview and Assessment Panel) and the Revd Bruce Pierce (Chairperson, ACPE Ireland). Bruce, who is Director of Education at Northridge House, St Luke's Home, Cork, paid tribute to Daniel's successful completion of the supervisory training programme and his ongoing commitment to pastoral education and research in the Health Service. Daniel completed his CPE education at University Hospital Kerry, Northridge House at Saint Luke's Charity, Cork, and Cork University Hospital.

News briefs



+++Service of Thanksgiving for the life of The late Very Revd Dr Victor Griffin, in the context of Choral Evensong (3.15pm). St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, on Sunday 14 May 2017

+++Services in Irish - Under the auspices of Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise, a service in Irish will be held in Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, in the Lady Chapel on the second Sunday of every month at 16.30. All are welcome.

+++ Soup Kitchen Volunteer Meeting -The response to St Patrick's Parish, Belfast, Door of Mercy Soup Kitchen for the homeless has been

overwhelming. All those who wish to volunteer are invited to a meeting in St Patrick's Old Schoolhouse this Thursday, 11 May, at 7pm. Please spread the word.

<http://www.irishnews.com/.../soup-kitchen-for-homeless-opens.../>

Girls' Friendly Society to celebrate 140th anniversary

The Girls' Friendly Society is celebrating its 140th anniversary this year and a service to mark the milestone event will take place in Christ Church Bray on Sunday May 21 at 3.00pm. The theme of the service will be 'Yesterday, Today and Forever'.

The Girls' Friendly Society was founded in London in 1875 by an Irishwoman, Mrs (Mary) Elizabeth Townsend, to help lonely girls who came from the country to work in the city.

This was the first girls' or women's organisation in the Church of England. It was a society for friendship and recreation in which all girls might share, bound together in a fellowship of Christian love and service. The rapidly spreading movement came quickly to Ireland, Scotland and

America in 1877, continuing in quick succession to Australia and other countries worldwide.

In Ireland GFS was started in Bray in 1877 and the first Central President was the Countess of Meath.



Former chorister Sir Ken Dodd endorses Book of Common Prayer

Comedian Sir Ken Dodd, has given his backing to the Book of Common Prayer as his "guide to life"

A self-professed life-long devotee of the Prayer Book, Dodd described it as "beautifully-written".

Deeply rooted in the Bible, The Book of Common Prayer was created in 1549 as the traditional service book of the Church of England.

However, its 1662 revised version remains in use today as written by its author, Thomas Cranmer.

Sir Ken says he fondly remembers it from his choir days at the Church of St John the Evangelist in Knotty Ash in Liverpool and says it is, "in many ways, very up-to-date".

The 89-year-old says while he enjoys the traditional language of the book - he would like to see it modernised so younger people can connect with it.

He thinks a combination of both, could be just what it needs, stating it would mean, "more to those struggling to cope with some of life's most basic problems, like keeping up with payments on the mortgage or the car, or coping with the care of sick children."

Nevertheless, he admits it would be a challenge for anyone to update a book that old.

Ken Dodd was given his knighthood earlier this year for services to entertainment and charity.



Sombre church funerals could be dying out

Research has found that the sober church funeral with tearful mourners in black has made way for novelty coffins and grievers in super hero costumes.

Co-op Funeralcare said there is a growing trend towards celebration with 66 per cent of adults believing funerals are more about celebrating life. A third say they would rather have an upbeat party than a wake.

Based on its experience on arranging 100,000 funerals annually, the Co-op's research has one of its top unique themes with everyone in attendance asked to wear leopard print to match the coffin. Other popular themes include

mourners wearing superhero costumes and funerals based on Only Fools and Horses with the hearse riding along to Morecambe and Wise's "Bring Me Sunshine".

Another increasing trend is funerals being referred to as 'destination funerals' which do not take place in churches, with requests for sports venues, parks and even local beauty spots.

David Collingwood, Head of the Co-Op's Funeral Operations, commented: "We are increasingly seeing this trend of personalisation within funerals, to reflect the passions and interests that our loved ones had while they were alive, rather than being a strictly sombre occasion."

See also -

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/themed-funerals-becoming-a-celebration-of-life-35690520.html>

Today in Christian History, May 9

May 9, 1760: Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, founder of the Moravian Brethren and a pioneer of ecumenism and mission work, dies in Herrnhut, Germany. By his death the Moravians (which themselves only numbered in the hundreds) had sent out 226 missionaries around the world.

May 9, 1983: Pope John Paul II reverses the Catholic Church's 1633 condemnation of Galileo Galilei's Copernican heliocentric theory of the universe.

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