



## Methodist Church to Reflect on Human Sexuality Issues

The Methodist Church in Ireland's Faith and Order Committee has assembled a working party to reflect on issues relating to human sexuality.

The working party includes two representatives from the Irish Methodist Youth and Children's

Department (IMYCD), and Dean John Mann, Chair of the Select Committee on Human Sexuality of the Church of Ireland.

The Working Party has received comprehensive terms of reference. These include:

- Undertaking a fundamental review of Christian teaching on human sexuality and practice
- Examining afresh how Holy Scripture may be faithfully interpreted in the Methodist Church in respect of issues concerning human sexuality
- Taking due cognisance of similar work being undertaken by sister Churches both in Ireland and elsewhere.

Other churches, undergoing similar processes have issued invitations to those with a particular or personal interest to contribute, in a strictly confidential manner, to the thinking being undertaken.

The Faith and Order Working Party, encouraged by these experiences, is now inviting anyone who would like to be heard to contact Gillian Kingston, Chair of the Working Party at [wphs@irishmethodist.org](mailto:wphs@irishmethodist.org).

## **THE INVITATION**

The Working Party is examining matters of human sexuality, including same-sex relationships, that face the Church. Scripture, reason, tradition and experience together form the lens through which the group will reflect.

The Working Party is inviting the Methodist people in Ireland to engage in a listening process concerning issues they feel the Church should be considering. The Working Party is inviting people to participate in this listening process either as individuals or as groups.

While the content of meetings will be noted by the group and used to continue discussion by the wider Church, all submissions will remain anonymous.

## **HOW IT WILL WORK**

Please express your interest, in confidence, through the following email address  
[wphs@irishmethodist.org](mailto:wphs@irishmethodist.org)

- The Working Party will do their best to arrange meetings to suit your requirements
- Each meeting will be hosted by at least one member of the Working Party

- You may share your perspective or story conversationally or by written submission.
- It is envisioned this process will run between October and December 2015.

## **Moderator pays tribute to ‘selfless and steadfast’ Queen**

Presbyterian Moderator, Rt. Rev. Dr. Ian McNie, has written to The Queen as she becomes the United Kingdom’s longest reigning monarch.

Surpassing Queen Victoria, her great-great-grandmother, the Moderator praised the ‘selfless and steadfast service’ that The Queen has given since succeeding her father, King George VI, 63 years ago.

In his letter Dr. McNie said, ‘While this particular Wednesday may be like any other, it marks a unique milestone in Your Majesty’s long reign and in the history of the United Kingdom.

‘For those of us here in Northern Ireland, Your Majesty’s visits over the past six decades with The Duke of Edinburgh at your side, have encouraged many; not least during our darkest days. More recently, your State Visit to the

Republic of Ireland not only resonated with symbolism, but also broke genuine historic ground in our island's journey of reconciliation and forgiveness. As President McAleese said at the time, your visit celebrated "a new chapter" in the relationship between Britain and Ireland.'

The Moderator also said that in an increasingly secular age The Queen's personal Christian witness had shone through in her recent Christmas broadcasts, as she described the Lord Jesus as 'an inspiration and an anchor in my life.'

Dr. McNie concluded his letter by saying, 'It is for this too that I give thanks for a faithful service rendered in His Name.'

## **Former Moderator leads Sunnyside's weekend celebration**

The celebrations started on Saturday afternoon with a family fun day when 10 of the residents – with a combined age of nearly 900 – started festivities with the launch of 10 balloons, and concluded with the planting of an Acer tree on Sunday by 101-year-old Mrs Irene Gill, Sunnyside's oldest resident.



***Pictured at Sunnyside House residential care home during its 10th anniversary celebrations are (LtoR): Rev. John Seawright, Convener of the Council for Social Witness Older Peoples' Services Committee, Anna McCaffrey, Sunnyside House Manager, Val Newell and her husband the Very Rev. Dr. Ken Newell.***

Anna McCaffrey, Sunnyside's manager said, "It has been a very special weekend. Residents, families and the 50 staff make Sunnyside a special place to be. I am blessed to have met so many lovely people during the time that I have been here and over the weekend we welcomed so many people, including Rev. Ken Newell, who

laid the foundation stone during his year as Moderator,” she said.

Run in partnership with Fold Housing Association, [Sunnyside House](#) has 45 single en suite rooms and welcomes residents from all denominations and seeks to provide care in a specifically Christian ethos and environment. Residents have the choice of attending regular worship services and fellowship times held within the home and a conscious effort is made to ensure residents are offered spiritual support and encouragement when requested.

Former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Very Rev. Dr. Ken Newell gave the address at the service of celebration at the home. “The way we care for our older citizens and how they are treated is a test of the moral character of any society and is one of the most important ministries of Christ Himself.

“The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has for many, many years worked alongside others to provide the highest standards of care. It was an absolute joy to be back again after 10 years to join in the celebrations with the residents, staff and families and to take the service on Sunday,” Dr. Newell said.

Resident Gloria Speechley, who is originally from Brisbane in Australia, also enjoyed the weekend celebrations. “I came to live at Sunnyside four years ago and I am very happy here as I think Sunnyside would be hard to match.”

The Church’s **Council for Social Witness** has overall management responsibility for Sunnyside House and the 17 other projects across 14 locations. The Council seeks to deliver an effective social witness service on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and to the wider community.

## **Waterfront finale for Bangor Worldwide 2015**

Bangor Worldwide recently held its 79<sup>th</sup> annual Convention celebrating and promoting world mission, culminating in a packed celebration event in the Waterfront Hall, Belfast.

Thirty events were held during a nine-day period at the end of August, with speakers travelling from China, Iran, Germany, France and Italy to update attendees on the work of their various mission agencies. Almost 80 agencies were represented, allowing people to receive insights





***The Chairman for the special Bangor Worldwide event at the Waterfront Hall, Bishop Ken Clarke (far left), chats with (L-R) Methodist President the Rev Brian Anderson, Bishop Harold Miller, Baptist President Pastor Leslie Hutchinson and former Presbyterian Moderator the Very Rev Dr Trevor Morrow.***

and pick up literature on an array of countries across the world.

Among those welcomed to the Waterfront stage were members of a small team from Musalaha, an organisation that seeks to create networks and nurture important conversations between Palestinian Christians and Messianic Jews.

These four team members were part of a larger delegation on a week-long visit to Dublin, and they were prayed for as they continue in their reconciliation efforts.

## **Quaker economist on Faith Justice & Corporation Tax**



Internationally-renowned economist, Quaker and tax-justice campaigner Richard Murphy will be speaking on the topic of faith, justice and corporation tax. He will be speaking on why cutting the rate of corporation tax is a bad deal

for Northern Ireland. He will be joined by a panel and there will be a question and answer session.

Event Date: Friday, 11 September, 2015 - 19:00 to 21:00. Venue: The Hub, Elmwood Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6AY. Organisation: Christians on the Left Northern Ireland.

Email: [christianleftni@gmail.com](mailto:christianleftni@gmail.com) Website with Further Details: <https://www.facebook.com/cotlni>

## **Special Services at St Columb's Cathedral, Londonderry**

*Forthcoming Special Services :*

**Wednesday, 9th September at 7.30 pm**

A special service honouring Queen Elizabeth II, the longest-reigning monarch in British history

**Wednesday, 23rd September**

Canadian Orpheus Male Choir to sing in Cathedral

**Wednesday, 30th September at 8.00 pm**

Mothers' Union Diocesan Festival Service

**Friday, 2nd October at 8.00 pm**

Recital by Martin Neary DMus FRCO

## **Sunday, 4th October**

Harvest Thanksgiving

Holy Communion at 8.00 am

Choral Eucharist at 11.00 am

Festival Evensong at 7.00 pm

## **Theology of the Body Course**

The Theology of the Body course will take place in Drumbo & Carryduff Parish on 8 consecutive Tuesdays. It will begin on Tuesday 15 September and will end on Tuesday 3 November 2015.

WHEN: September 15, 2015 at 7:30 pm – 9:00 pm. WHERE: Church of The Immaculate Heart of Mary, Knockbracken Drive Carryduff, Belfast

## **Bible Week 2016 speaker**

The diocese of Down and Dromore's Bible week speaker in 2016 is to be the Revd Dr Ian Provan, who has been the Marshall Sheppard Professor of Biblical Studies at Regent College, Vancouver, since 1997.

Born and educated in the UK, Dr. Provan retains strong family, academic, and church connections with his homeland. He received his MA at Glasgow University in Mediaeval History and



Archaeology, his BA from London Bible College in Theology, and his PhD from Cambridge, where his thesis focused on the books of Kings, and was subsequently published as *Hezekiah and the Books of Kings*. His academic teaching career took him to King's College London, the University of Wales, and the University of Edinburgh, where he was a senior lecturer in Hebrew and Old Testament Studies. Dr. Provan has written numerous essays and articles, and several books including commentaries on Lamentations, 1 and 2 Kings, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs, and co-authored with Phil Long and Tremper Longman *A Biblical History of Israel* (John Knox Press, 2003). Most recently he released

*Against the Grain: Selected Essays* (Regent College Publishing, 2015), *Seriously Dangerous Religion: What the Old Testament Really Says and Why It Matters* (Baylor University Press, 2014) and *Convenient Myths: The Axial Age, Dark Green Religion, and the World that Never Was* (Baylor University Press, 2013). His next book, *Discovering Genesis*, is forthcoming from SPCK at the end of 2015. After this, he plans to write and publish a book on Protestant biblical hermeneutics, projected for release in 2017.

Dr. Provan is an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland; a Life Member of Clare Hall, Cambridge; and the recipient of an Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellowship. He and his wife, Lynette, have four children. He is also a qualified Provincial B Licence soccer coach (BC) and ARA rowing coach (UK).

Next year's Bible Week will take place from Tuesday 30 August to Friday 2 September. The venue will be announced.

## **Rural partnership begins innovative project tackling financial exclusion**

Comic Relief is supporting a new initiative by The Arthur Rank Centre, The Plunkett Foundation and The Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Division to extend access and use of rural credit unions. This innovative project is backed by the Association of British Credit Unions, the Methodist and United Reformed Church, and is likely to see new credit union service points created in rural churches and community buildings nationwide.

Project Consultant, Janet Wilkinson, will be taking the lead on this initiative and working directly with six credit unions across the UK. Janet is the Director of Bristol Credit Union and an experienced project manager with over 15 years' experience in the financial services sector. She will be helping the six credit unions increase their rural membership and develop products suitable for rural people. Her findings will then be shared to enable other groups to establish their own rural service points.

"I'm really excited to be part of this programme," says Janet, "It has the potential to extend the help Credit Unions give to communities and individuals throughout the UK through



collaborative partnerships, spreading the word about local and community based finance".

Many imagine rural life to be idyllic, but over 1.3 million people live in poverty, often hidden within predominately wealthy areas, and financial exclusion is commonplace. The latest official research found that around 200,000 rural residents do not have access to a bank account and only one in eight banks or building societies are present in village communities.

The decline in mainstream banking facilities, and the low number of free cash points, has created



'financial service deserts' in many rural areas with residents often turning to payday loans and high-cost credit to fund everyday needs.

For more information call 024 7685 3060 or email [info@germinate.net](mailto:info@germinate.net)

## **New Anglican Communion secretary general commissioned**

The Most Rev. Josiah Idowu-Fearon was commissioned as secretary general of the Anglican Communion last week in the Chapel of St. Andrew at the Anglican Communion Office in London.

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, presided and preached at the commissioning service.

Words of the 100th archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, read by the Most Rev. David Chillingworth, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, centred on the task of giving leadership to the mission of the global Anglican Communion in service of reconciliation of Christian disunity: "We are going to devote ourselves to our mission completely, not by viewing Anglicanism as an end in itself, but as a

fragment of the One Holy Catholic Church of Christ.”

In his homily, Archbishop Welby pointed out that the two readings for the service – 1 Corinthians 1.26-31 and John 14.15-26 – highlighted the weakness of the person who follows Christ, and, by implication, the weakness of the church, which “carries into its life the reality of the culture and the nature of its members.”

But, he added, as the chosen people of God, the people of the Church are “what Christ makes us” and need to return continually to our dependence on Christ.

## **Nigerian bishop kidnapped**

The Anglican Bishop of Gwagwalada in the Province of Nigeria has been kidnapped and is being held for ransom, according to news reports.

The News Agency of Nigeria and several newspapers are reporting that the captors of the Rt Revd Moses Tabuwaye are demanding 40 million Nigerian Naira (approximately £132,400 GBP or \$202,000 USD) for his release.

"I urge all of you Christians to be very vigilant and security conscious wherever you find yourselves," the Primate of Nigeria, the Most Revd Nicholas Okoh, told worshippers taking part in a pre-pilgrimage retreat on Saturday. "The issue of kidnapping is rampant in the country but we can still curtail the menace if we are vigilant. If we fail to live together as brothers in prayers, we shall perish as fools, so we should endeavour to be our brothers' keepers."

In 2013, Archbishop Ignatius Kattey was kidnapped with his wife Beatrice near their Port Harcourt home in the Niger Delta region; and were released: the archbishop after a week and his wife within a few hours of being taken.

## Media digest

### **No upper limit on number of refugees Ireland can take: Tanaiste - Irish Independent**

"In relation to the people coming into Europe, Ireland absolutely has to and ... Meanwhile, Defence Minister Simon Coveney has warned that **religion** ...

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/no-upper-limit-on-refugee-number-ireland-can-take-tnaiste-31506705.html>

### **Catholic parishes may take two refugee families says bishop - Irish Times**

Catholic parishes in **Ireland** may go beyond calls by Pope Francis to house a refugee family and take two each, Bishop of Elphin Kevin Doran has said ...

**Labour minister wins €18k car in raffle ...  
and immediately gives it back - Journal.ie**

[http://www.thejournal.ie/labour-minister-gives-back-car-won-in-affle-2316819-Sep2015/?utm\\_source=twitter\\_self](http://www.thejournal.ie/labour-minister-gives-back-car-won-in-affle-2316819-Sep2015/?utm_source=twitter_self)

**Times/Mirror/Mail/FT/Tel/ITV/Sky**

The Archbishop of Canterbury is widely quoted (see above) as describing David Cameron's plans to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees as a very slim response to the crisis. Yesterday the Prime Minister announced that Britain would take an additional 20,000 from camps bordering Syria over the next 5 years. Speaking in the House of Lords during a debate on the announcement, Most Revd Justin Welby also suggested that Britain should do more to help European nations cope with the numbers arriving in the continent.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/politics/article4550345.ece>

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/fury-david-cameron-agrees-britain-6400741>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3224902/Syrian-orphans-offered-help-Cameron-promises-Britain-safe-haven-thousands-refugee-camps.html>

[http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/d709bb32-5581-11e5-9846-de406ccb37f2.html?FTCamp=engage/CAP/webapp/Channel\\_Moreover//B2B#axzz3l1gEcZim](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/d709bb32-5581-11e5-9846-de406ccb37f2.html?FTCamp=engage/CAP/webapp/Channel_Moreover//B2B#axzz3l1gEcZim)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/11849631/Four-thousand-Syrian-refugees-every-year-to-be-given-homes-in-UK-David-Cameron-announces.html>  
<http://www.itv.com/news/story/2015-09-08/mps-to-debate-refugee-plans-as-slim-response-criticised/>  
<http://www.itv.com/news/update/2015-09-08/welby-camerons-refugee-move-a-slim-response/>  
<http://news.sky.com/story/1548432/pm-in-delicate-balancing-act-over-refugees>

### **Times/Mail/BMJ**

Baroness Butler-Sloss is quoted in the *Times* as saying that elderly, ill and vulnerable people will be put at risk because of proposed changes to in the law to allow for assisted dying. The bill is due to be debated by MPs in the Commons on Friday. In the *Mail*, Labour MP Rob Marris claims that up to 1,750 people will use assisted dying ever year. The *BMJ* runs the story of the Faith leaders letter to MPs which appeared in the Sunday papers.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/law/article4550271.ece>  
[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3225825/Up-1-750-Britons-use-assisted-suicide-year-Prediction-aided-ahead-historic-Commons-vote-right-die.html?ITO=1490&ns\\_mchannel=rss&ns\\_campaign=1490](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3225825/Up-1-750-Britons-use-assisted-suicide-year-Prediction-aided-ahead-historic-Commons-vote-right-die.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)  
<http://www.bmj.com/content/351/bmj.h4807.short?rss=1>

### **Guard/Times**

The *Guardian* notes the rise of the alternative funeral. According to a poll quoted, a third of

people would consider a non-church location and a quarter would ask mourners to wear colourful clothes. The *Times* features the work of the Revd Paul Sinclair, who runs a company offering motorcycle funerals.

<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2015/sep/08/alternative-funerals-beaches-buses-anything-but-black>  
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article4549173.ece>

## **Huff Post**

Nick Spencer, the director of Theos, the religion and society think tank, poses the question “Who wants a Christian Coronation?”

<http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/nick-spencer/who-wants-a-christian-coronation/b-8099048.html>

## **Mail**

Reports that a long lost cast of the skull of the Venerable Bede, who died in 735AD, has been found in a cupboard in Cambridge University. The cast is believed to have been made in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when his tomb in Durham cathedral was opened.

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3225534/Long-lost-cast-skull-Venerable-Bede-store-cupboard-Cambridge-University.html?ITO=1490&ns\\_mchannel=rss&ns\\_campaign=1490](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3225534/Long-lost-cast-skull-Venerable-Bede-store-cupboard-Cambridge-University.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

## **Exp**

Archaeologists believe they may have found the resting place of the mortal remains of St Matthew, under the waters of lake Issyk-Kul, in eastern Kyrgyzstan, Russia. They are amongst remains found in a former Armenian Monastery submerged under 23 metres of water.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/science/603649/Has-burial-site-of-a-disciple-of-Jesus-been-found-at-bottom-of-23m-deep-lake>

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