



Challenge to turn anger and rage into Christian love, Bishop of Manchester

Churches have been urged by the Bishop of Manchester to open their doors to people wanting space to pray after a suicide bombing in the city left 22 people dead - including children - and 59 injured.

The Bishop of Manchester, David Walker, yesterday issued the following statement
“Today is a day to mourn the dead, to pray with their families and with the injured, and to reaffirm

our determination that those who murder and maim will never defeat us.

“Like other great cities, Manchester is an obvious target for terrorists to choose. What makes this latest atrocity particularly dreadful is the deliberate choice of a concert known to attract very young fans. Many lives will be lived out, impacted by this tragedy for long years to come. Others have had decades of life ripped away from them.

“There is a proper anger and rage in the face of events like this. Our challenge will be to direct that rage and anger to be a force for good. We will rally around the victims and their families. We will unite across our diversity, drawing close especially to any that the terrorists would seek to separate us from. And we will rebuild and repair the damage to our city, as we have done before.

“Today is a day to mourn, and I would ask churches throughout Greater Manchester and beyond to make space and time for people who wish to come into their buildings and [pray](#). But today is also a day to begin our response. A response that will crush terrorism not by violence but by the power of love. A love which Christians celebrate especially now in Eastertide.”

The Rev. Bill Mullally, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland has issued the following:

“I am appalled by this attack carried out on the people at this concert in the Manchester Arena. An attack on our young people is an attack on us all. Our thoughts and prayers are with those families and friends who have had loved ones killed and injured, and with those who are still awaiting news of loved ones unaccounted for.

“We pray for all those who have been injured and traumatised. We pay tribute to the emergency services and all in Manchester who offered safe haven in this crisis. In this time of distress may we continue to seek peace and unity among all peoples”.

See last night’s CNI news for responses from the Queen, the Pope and Irish church leaders.

Church of Scotland expected to back same-sex marriage

The Church of Scotland is preparing to take a significant step towards same-sex marriage, BBC News Scotland reports.

The Kirk's General Assembly - gathered in Edinburgh - will be asked to approve more work on how such weddings could take place in church.

Equal marriage remains a divisive issue within the church.

Since 2014, Scotland has allowed same-sex couples to marry but individual church traditions can each decide whether to participate.

A report on the issue prepared for the General Assembly invited the church to take stock of its history of discrimination against gay people and to apologise "individually and corporately".

Moderator Designate the Reverend Dr Derek Browning said: "On Thursday afternoon the theological forum will be bringing a report to the General Assembly, and this year what they're asking to do is for the assembly, first of all, to consider making an apology to the gay community for things that have have been said in the past and the assembly will have to make up its mind on that.

"But also it's going to be asking our legal questions committee to see what the issues are round about allowing ministers to perform same sex marriage if they choose to do so, and



Dr Browning said there has been "hurt caused" by the debate on same-sex marriage

equally for safeguards for those who, for conscience sake, feel that this is not something they can do."

Dr Browning added: "Over the years the assembly has been very well aware that on both sides of the debate, very strong things have been said and therefore an apology certainly within the Christian context is always important because there's been hurt caused on both sides of the debate.

"Hopefully we're in a position to move forwards, but that will be for the General Assembly to make its mind up on, on Thursday."

Loving relationships

At the time of the report's publication, the Reverend Scott Rennie, who supports equal marriage, said: "Loving marriages, whether they are gay or straight, can make for a good and happy life.

"Christ's love for us, his people, is reflected in loving relationships. Marriage is something to be celebrated. I look forward to the day when I am able to conduct weddings for all couples, gay or straight, in the name of God."

The Reverend Mike Goss said: "Same-sex relationships are not what God has planned for us as human beings. We are all messed up in different ways in our lives.

"I don't see that people in straight-sex relationships have got it all sorted. We know too many of them have gone wrong as well. But we don't bless that which is wrong and that has got to be key in terms of the Gospel."

Anglican tradition

The Scottish Episcopal Church, part of the Anglican communion, is expected to approve

same-sex marriage when its General Synod meets later this year.

Such a move would make it the first major church in the UK to marry gay and lesbian couples in church.

The Church of England will not conduct gay marriages, or allow clergy to be in a same-sex marriage.

The Scottish move could intensify the split within the wider Anglican Communion of 85 million Christians.

Last year the Communion sanctioned the US Episcopal Church when it decided to allow gay marriage in church.

Dublin Ecumenical Bible Week: Faith Comes by Hearing the Word of Christ

Ecumenical Bible Week is a major ecumenical initiative in its fourth year, led by the Archdiocese of Dublin and United Dioceses of Dublin & other Christian Churches in Dublin. It provides a localised programme of reflection on Scripture and a number of Core Events – Thinking



**ECUMENICAL
BIBLE WEEK 2017**
4TH - 11TH JUNE

**Faith comes from hearing
the Word of Christ**

Rom 10:17

A, Symposium, Pentecost Project for children and online resources.

This year the programme honours the fifth centenary of the Reformation (1517–2017).

Ecumenical Bible Week will start on Sunday 4th June @ 7:30 pm in Lutherhaus, Adelaide Road,

Dublin 2 with Sung Lutheran Vespers. The week will close on Sunday 11th June @7:30pm-9:00 pm also in this venue with a film entitled, Martin Luther: Heretic, followed by a reflection and discussion.

This year there will be 23 separate events, 25 presenters in various venues (Holy Cross College Clonliffe, Lutherhaus, Rathgar, Glasnevin, Swords, Arklow, Clondalkin, and Ballyfermot). There will be debate, discussion, talks, music and hopefully lots of participation.

- The 2017 Symposium takes place on Friday 9th June (2–5pm) in the Holy Cross Diocesan Centre, Clonliffe Road. Papers by Prof Tony Lane, Prof Salvador Ryan and discussion chaired by Archbishop Michael Jackson – Register on www.bibleweek.ie

- Thinking Allowed – Friday 9th June @7:30 pm , in Holy Cross Diocesan Centre, Conliffe Road, – Topic: Is the Reformation Over? There will be a chaired panel representing leaders in the different churches and traditions and an opportunity for audience participation. www.bibleweek.ie

- The Pentecost Schools Project 2017 takes place in Ballyfermot and Chapelizod. Pupils are learning the stories of Acts using various creative

media and will create a printed booklet. A Launch and Presentation night will take place on Tuesday 6th June at 7pm in Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, Ballyfermot.

Please support this initiative and advertise the information on notice boards, online and on social media.

For more information – www.bibleweek.ie ,
Facebook – www.facebook.com/bibleweek –
Email – hello@bibleweek.ie – Book for
Symposium online at www.bibleweek.ie or
phone 01-8087533

Annual ecumenical Pentecost service in Clogher dioceses

On the afternoon of Sunday 4 June 2017 at 3pm, the Day of Pentecost, the annual ecumenical service that has customarily been led by both Bishops of Clogher will take place this year at St Sillian's Church, Tyholland, Co Monaghan, followed by refreshments in the Tyholland Community Centre.

The Church of Ireland Bishop of Clogher, the Rt Rev John McDowell, and the Rt Rev Monsignor Joseph McGuinness, Roman Catholic Diocesan Administrator of the Diocese of Clogher, will lead

this special annual service, together with local clergy. The address will be given by the Most Rev Noel Treanor, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Down and Connor, who is a native of Tyholland. During the service two young people will give their reflections on Pentecost, and the singing will be led by musicians from the local area.

The origins of the Christian community of Tyholland can be traced to the fifth century, the time of St Patrick. Scholars of the period and of Irish saints point to an account in the Tripartite Life of St Patrick in which they tell us: 'Patrick came to Teach Taláin, now Tehallan [or Tyholland], where he left a bishop named Cillín and other followers'. (Ó Ríain, Dictionary of Irish Saints, 2011). The present church of St Sillian's dates from the late 1700s.

An invite to get involved in Global Outreach Day

Anyone wanting to get involved in Global Outreach Day and share their faith with someone who doesn't know Jesus is invited to the Church Army Connect Base this Saturday.

There will be an opportunity to go out and engage with people in the north Belfast area.

Stephen Whitten, Church Army Evangelist with the North Belfast Centre of Mission, located at Connect Base, said: “May 27 is Global Outreach Day where thousands upon thousands of Christians throughout the world will be taking up the challenge to share their faith with at least one person who doesn’t know Jesus. Many churches throughout Ireland are joining the movement to see Christians from every background moving together to make Jesus known.

“If you are keen to be involved and would like to join with others you are welcome to head down to the Church Army Connect Base for 1:30pm. We will be heading out to engage with people in the area to start conversations, share our stories and be a blessing. If you have never done anything like this before come down and give it a go!” encouraged Stephen.

The event will finish around 3:30pm. Connect Base is located at 311 Shankill Road, Belfast, BT13 3AA.

Amplifying the Christian voice in a secular Europe

The Conference of European Churches is hosting a conference and networking event for



European church and ecumenical communicators and journalists in September:

“The theme of the conference—Turn it up!—speaks to the challenges we all face in communicating Christian perspectives in an increasingly secular and multicultural Europe. We will discuss political, theological, and sociological aspects of this milieu and work together to develop constructive responses. We will be joined by church leaders, scholars, and journalists working directly on issues relating to the coverage of religion in Europe.

“This conference will give participants the opportunity to learn and develop best practices

for their home contexts, to learn more about a pan-European issue, and to connect with other professionals working in their field. All of this will happen against the backdrop of the French national context, in wake of its recent elections, and long standing history of state *laïcité*

“We will gather at the Maison du Protestantisme in Paris, thanks to the hospitality of CEC Member Churches Federation of Evangelical Baptist Churches in France and the French Protestant Federation.”

For further details click [here](#)

Fewer Americans believe Bible is ‘the actual word of God’ – Gallup poll

Fewer than one in four Americans believe the Bible is the literal word of God, the lowest proportion in Gallup's 40-year trend.

Fewer than one in four Americans (24%) now believe the Bible is ‘the actual word of God, and is to be taken literally, word for word’. However, about half of Americans feel that the Bible is the inspired word of God but that not all of it should be taken literally. The figures come from a

Gallup poll, based on telephone interviews conducted between May 3-7, 2017, randomly sampling 1,011 adults.

26% view it as ‘a book of fables, legends, history and moral precepts recorded by man’. The percentage of literal believers has gradually decreased for about 10 years from the mid-1970s from almost 40%. In a stark contrast, the percentage who defines the Bible as just stories has doubled – most of the increase happening since 2014.

Non-white Americans, adults aged 50 and over and adults without a college education tend to make up the people who believe that the Bible is the word of God, rather than stories and history.

However, those who are more sceptic that literalist, tend to be men, whites, adults aged 18 to 29 as well as those aged 30 to 49 and college graduates.

The figures indicate that, the greatest swing is happening among young people, which could mean that this trend may speed up over the next few years.

Americans across all the age groups still accept the Bible as a holy document, but are not as

focused on God's direct role in it. This may mean people are more willing than previously, to believe that the Bible is open to interpretation. With this in mind, it may have consequences for how Americans start to feel on certain moral issues.

Christian charity warns Instagram can negatively impact young people's mental health

A report has found that Instagram is the worst social media site in terms of its impact on the mental health of young people.

The Royal Society for Public Health's (RSPH) survey called #StatusofMind found the photo-sharing app negatively impacted on people's body image, sleep and fear of missing out.

Helen Cutteridge, who leads on emotional wellbeing for the Christian charity Youthscape, told Premier's News hour that she wasn't surprised by the findings.

She said: "Instagram is this platform for young people to constantly compare themselves to each other.



"If you're waking up in the morning and you've got gross hair and gross breath and you're comparing yourself to an image that your friend has spent half an hour taking - putting on make-up and adding the right filter - you're comparing yourself to something that's unattainable and this happens for young people daily."

However, the survey of 1,479 youngsters aged 14 to 24, found Instagram was positive in terms of self-expression and self-identity.

Respondents were asked to score how each of the social media platforms they use impact upon issues such as anxiety, loneliness and community building.

The RSPH's report said: "The platforms that are supposed to help young people connect with each other may actually be fuelling a mental health crisis."

The site with the most positive rating was YouTube, followed by Twitter. Facebook and Snapchat came third and fourth respectively.

Recommendations from the report included social media platforms discreetly signposting help to those potentially suffering from mental health issues.

The survey also found that seven in 10 people questioned supported introducing pop-ups on sites such as Twitter and Facebook to warn users about heavy usage.

Cutteridge however doesn't think young people will pay attention to these warnings and said adults can help.

She added: "As adults we need to portray and model better uses of social media and that sometimes means putting up photos where we don't look our best and being honest about our lives."

Today in Christian History, May 24

May 24, 1089 (traditional date): Archbishop of Canterbury, scholar, and church reformer Lanfranc dies. Known primarily for his development of the doctrine of

transubstantiation, in which the eucharistic bread and wine become Christ's body and blood, he also educated brilliant scholar Anselm and future pope Alexander II.

May 24, 1543: Polish astronomer and cleric Nicolas Copernicus dies in Poland. His heliocentric (sun-centered) concept of the solar system was radical, though not unheard of before his time. Still, some theologians strongly criticized the theory. The Roman Catholic church never ordained Copernicus, but he participated in a religious community at the cathedral of Frauenburg (see issue 76: Christian Face of the Scientific Revolution).

May 24, 1689: Parliament passes England's Toleration Act, granting freedom of worship to Dissenters (non-Anglican Protestants). but not to Catholics and atheists.

May 24, 1738: Father of Methodism John Wesley feels his "heart strangely warmed" when he hears a reading of the preface to Luther's commentary on Romans at London's Aldersgate Chapel).

May 24, 1844: Samuel Morse sends the first long-distance telegraph message: "What hath God wrought."

May 24, 1854: Presbyterians found the first black college in the United States: Pennsylvania's Lincoln University.

May 24, 1878: Harry Emerson Fosdick, popular champion of liberal Christianity and often called "the most influential interpreter of religion to his generation," is born.

