



**Roman Catholic Primate preaches at Reformation service in C of I cathedral - The Dean of St Patrick's Anglican Cathedral, Armagh, Gregory Dunstan; The Roman Catholic Primate of All Ireland, Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin; and the Anglican Primate of Ireland, Archbishop of Armagh Richard Clarke. (Report in yesterday's CNI).**

## Reformation 500: The Hedge School

It is 500 years since Martin Luther nailed his Ninety–five Theses to the door of his Wittenberg church, attacking the Catholic Church’s corrupt practice of selling ‘indulgences’ to absolve sin, setting in train the Protestant Reformation.

But was that really about religion — or a cynical powergrab by some of the princes of Europe? Or was it an early manifestation of Brexit — disillusionment of the periphery with the perceived corruption of the cosmopolitan centre?

What is its relevance today? To discuss these and related matters join History Ireland editor Tommy Graham, Adrian Empey (Church of Ireland Historical Society), John McCafferty (UCD), Alison Forrestal (NUIG) and Gesa Thiessen (TCD).

Wednesday, 18th October at 7pm, in St Werburgh’s Church, Werburgh Street, Dublin.

For further details contact - Church of Ireland Historical Society [secretary.coihs@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.coihs@gmail.com)

## **Archbishop of Burundi visits Cork partner diocese**

The current overseas partnership and development project of parishes throughout Cork, Cloyne and Ross is with the Anglican Church in Burundi.

On Sunday, 8th October, the Archbishop of Burundi, the Most Reverend Martin Blaise Nyaboho visited Cork, Cloyne and Ross. He received hospitality at the Bishops' Palace where he was welcomed by the Bishop, Dr Paul Colton, and Mrs Susan Colton. Afterwards the Archbishop preached at the Harvest Festival Eucharist in St Fin Barre's Cathedral, before joining members of the congregation for lunch in the St Fin Barre's Cathedral Centre.

The partnership project, being run in partnership also with Christian Aid Ireland and the Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal has been supporting partner organisation, The Anglican Church of Burundi (EAB) in the Dioceses of Matana and Makamba as they work with farmers to increase their income; in the short term by supporting

them to sustainably increase their production of maize, and in the long term by building the capacity of farmers to adapt to sustainable practices that will endure the changing climate.

## **New Rector of Rathmines with Harold's Cross**

The Revd Rob Jones has been appointed Rector of Rathmines with Harold's Cross. Rob has been connected to the parish for the duration of his ministry having been Vicar of the Parish for the last seven years. Before that he served there on a part time basis for 18 months during his Curacy, which he also served in St Catherine's. His appointment follows the retirement of Canon Neil McEndoo in June.

As Vicar of the parish, Rob has been leading the Holy Trinity fresh expression which has been running very successfully alongside the traditional parish services for almost seven years. Rob has also been involved in coordinating and developing the new Church of Ireland Third Level Chaplaincy Team.

Rob grew up in Dublin in the parish of St Bartholomew's on Clyde Road. He attended University College Dublin where he studied science. Before he was called to ministry, he



**The Revd Rob Jones, his wife Dilys and their family.**

worked for Coillte and was seconded by them to work internationally in development projects with a number of overseas banks. He was ordained 10 years ago.

Rob has been married to Dilys for 15 years and they have two children, Ethan and Alannah.

He said he was honoured and thankful for his appointment as Rector. “I am very excited to be leading the fresh expression and now to be Rector of the Parish of Rathmines with Harold’s Cross. I am looking forward to developing this ministry further and to seeing our story unfold as these two churches unite and God intertwines our stories,” he said.

## **Church Board of Education welcomes RI budget**

The General Synod Board of Education (RI) of the Church of Ireland has welcomed the announcement in yesterday’s Budget that the pupil teacher ratio at primary level will reduce to 26:1. The reduction in PTR together with the announced increase in resources to fund additional release days for teaching principals will be of particular benefit to smaller schools. The decision to increase the number SNAs will be welcomed by both schools and parents.

The statement continues - While the Board is disappointed that the Capitation Grant for Primary Schools has not been restored to its pre 2012 level, the Board acknowledges that the allocation of 16.6% of total expenditure (€10 Billion) signals an on-going investment of

resources to educational provision within available resources.

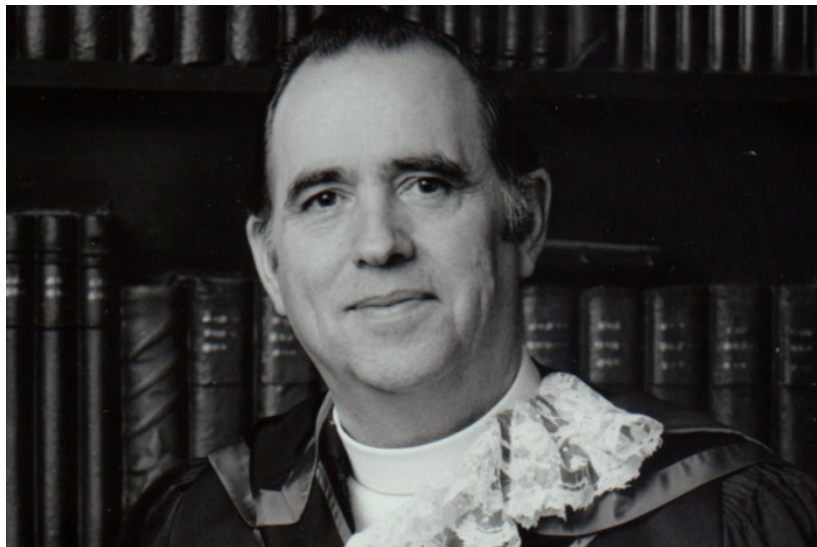
## **Thanksgiving service for former Presbyterian moderator Rev Dr Howard Cromie**

Tributes were paid at a service of thanksgiving in Lisburn on Monday for former Presbyterian moderator the Rev Dr Howard Cromie, the News Letter reports.

Railway Street Presbyterian Church was packed to capacity at the service for the 89-year-old senior cleric who died at a Saintfield nursing home after a lengthy illness.

Leading the tributes was present Moderator the Rev Dr Noble McNeely, who was joined by other senior Presbyterian clerics and former colleagues of Dr Cromie.

Dr Cromie, a Co Down man, was minister of Railway Street Church for 31 years from 1962 to 1993. He was licensed as a Presbyterian minister at Scarva Street Church, Banbridge in 1952 and was minister of Scots Presbyterian Church, Enniskillen for eight years before moving to Lisburn.



Theologically, Dr Cromie was a conservative evangelical who was a highly popular preacher and pastor within his own congregation, and at presbytery, synod and general assembly levels.

He was elected moderator for the one-year term in 1984, after being nominated with five other ministers. In the first presbytery election, he tied with nearest contender – Rev Richard Dickson – and, in a subsequent vote, was returned overwhelmingly by 16 votes to six. In other influential church roles,



Dr Cromie was convenor of the board of the Irish Mission for eight years, and he was also a member of the Church Extension Committee.

He was a prolific writer keenly interested in Irish Presbyterian and Ulster-Scots history and, in 1976, he authored a book 'Ulster Settlers in America', tracing 18th century Presbyterian migration.

In the book, he wrote: "It is sometimes claimed Presbyterianism in the American colonies sprang mainly from Scottish Presbyterianism. This is a generalisation which is certainly not accurate unless the term Scottish is specially defined."

Dr Cromie is survived by his wife Kathleen, two sons Alan and David and two daughters Gillian and Fiona.

## **C of E's equality law exemptions allow for 'abuse, homophobia and sexism' says bishop**

A serving bishop has called for the Church of England to be stripped of its exemptions under the Equalities Act to stamp out 'deep structures of abuse, homophobia and sexism'.

Under the 2010 legislation the established Church has special rights to overrule equality laws meaning when it appoints people to new roles it can discriminate on the basis of sex, marital history, gender identity, sexuality and faith if they conflict with 'strongly held religious convictions'. A 2013 document approved by senior bishops permitted church officials to insist clergy were 'not a transsexual and were not married to a divorcee whose ex-spouse was still alive.

But the Bishop of Buckingham says these rules also allow for a culture of abuse, homophobia and sexism.

Rt Rev Alan Wilson has called for these special privileges to be removed and priests be allowed to conduct same-sex weddings if they wish.

'If the church were far more observant of the Equality Act, then deep structures of abuse, homophobia and sexism would not be embedded in the church in the way they are,' he told the **Times**.

When asked if the Act should be altered he said: 'Yes. The Equality Act is used as an accountability standard in modern Britain. It describes how we understand public



**Alan Wilson, 62, is Bishop of Buckingham and has been an outspoken critic of the Church's approach to sexuality**

accountability in every institution except the Church. That does seem quite extraordinary.'

Quoting Romans 13's instruction 'let everyone be subject to the governing authorities', he also called for an overhaul of the CofE's safeguarding approach. Despite 'good intentions' the Church was still failing survivors, he said.

'I think the Church needs to rethink the whole safeguarding thing,' he said, adding the standard response was 'hide behind the sofa and call the lawyers'.

It comes after **abuse survivors staged a protest** outside a meeting of Anglican leaders

from around the world last week calling for a 'tangible' change in the Church's response.

The Bishop at Lambeth, Tim Thornton, told the victims: 'We have done lots of things wrong in the past and I am sure there are still things going on today. We are trying our best and I think we can show evidence of things we are putting in place.

'But yes we have still got lessons to learn and we want to carry on learning from and listening to you.'

## **Church of England speaks out on students fair controversy**

A college at Oxford University which excluded a Christian Union (CU) from its fresher's fair has been accused by the Church of England of misunderstanding "the nature of debate and dialogue".

Students at Balliol sparked controversy over their decision last week to bar the CU, in order that the event to welcome first year students could be a "safe and secular space". The decision, taken by a Balliol College



committee, was reversed. Religious groups will be allowed to participate in future fairs.

The Church of England's chief education officer, Rev Nigel Genders, said: "Freedom of religion and belief is a fundamental principle that underpins our country and its great institutions and universities.

"Christian Unions represent some of the largest student-led organisations in many universities across the country and to exclude them in this way is to misunderstand the nature of debate and dialogue and at odds with the kind of society we are all seeking to promote."

The Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF) say the situation was amicably resolved and that "Most Student Unions are fair-minded and enjoy a good

relationship with the CU in their university. Director of UCCF, Rev Richard Cunningham said: "We are however concerned that the current desire to provide safe spaces on campus does not infringe on the core liberties of freedom of speech and freedom of association which are surely foundational to the university experience and indeed to basic human flourishing."

A Christian Union spokeswoman said an incident of this kind is "a pretty rare experience" and has been "amicably resolved".

She continued: "Most student unions are fair-minded and enjoy a good relationship with the CU in their university.

Balliol College said it is pleased "that the students themselves have now resolved this matter."

It added: "Balliol is a tolerant, friendly college where students of all faiths and none are free to worship and express their beliefs openly."

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