



New history of C of I launched

The Church of Ireland and its past: history, interpretation and identity was officially launched by Professor John Morrill (Selwyn College,

Cambridge) in the Treasury of Christ Church Cathedral yesterday Friday 20 October as part of a conference marking the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

The Church of Ireland and its past: history, interpretation and identity, edited by Mark Empey, Alan Ford and Miriam Moffitt, is now out and available in all good bookstores. Co-funded by the C of I Historical Society and the Standing Committee of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland, and printed by Four Courts Press, this book 'brings together leading Irish historians who examine how the history of the Church of Ireland has been written in the 500 years since the Reformation'.

With seventeen chapters and over three hundred pages, this work has much to offer the interested reader. (For a full list of the contributors and their chapters visit the following link: <http://www.fourcourtspress.ie/books/2017/the-church-of-ireland-and-its-past/contents>.) It traces the emergence of a 'distinctly Protestant narrative' and examines key figures in the debate such as Archbishop James Ussher, Sir James Ware and Robert Ware in the seventeenth century; Walter Harris, Thomas Campbell and Revd Edward Ledwich in the eighteenth century; and J.H. Todd, Charles Elrington, Richard Mant, William

Reeves and George T. Stokes in the nineteenth century. The twentieth century receives equal attention with analysis of W.A. Philips's influential *History of the Church of Ireland* as well as a number of fascinating discussions on the development of the Church of Ireland's history and how the traditional confessional interpretation was significantly challenged by the professional elite.

One striking feature is the inclusion of a chapter on personal reflections by three historians (Nicholas Canny, Karl S. Bottigheimer and Steven G. Ellis) who shaped and influenced the debate on 'why the Reformation failed' in the late 1970s and 1980s. In some respects, this is a historiography within a historiography.

Two-day conference on 'Reformation 500' underway in Dublin

'Reformation 500', a major international two-day conference organised by the Church of Ireland Historical Society and the Catholic Historical Society of Ireland, was formally opened jointly by Archbishop Michael Jackson and Bishop John Fleming, Bishop of Killala and President of the Catholic Historical Society of Ireland,

representing Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin yesterday afternoon (Friday 20th October 2017).

The Conference, featuring contributions from a range of notable academics, is considering themes relating to: Martin Luther and the Reformation; ‘Tudor Brexit’ – how European were the British and Irish Reformations?; Beyond Luther – Reform movements in Europe, Scotland and Ireland; and Calvinists and Lutherans: contesting the European Reformation. The first day is being held in Christ Church Cathedral and the second day at the St Patrick’s Campus of Dublin City University at Drumcondra.

In his introductory remarks welcoming delegates, Archbishop Michael Jackson said: ‘The Conference itself has both a peripatetic and a pilgrimage feel. It begins here and moves to The St Patrick’s Campus of Dublin City University, as befits its joint organization and the coming together of two distinguished Historical Societies. What could have so easily in the past modelled division now models diversity with distinction. This is wonderful and in Ireland in particular is never to be taken for granted or squandered. Rigorous intellectual enquiry must lie at the heart of knowledge and of justice, if forgiveness and reconciliation are to have a

sporting chance in the long term, either socially or politically.’ He continued by saying, ‘This Conference plays a life-giving role in this coming together around ideas, concepts and happenings – history made and history in the making.’

Archbishop Jackson concluded: ‘This Conference would probably surprise Martin Luther by its instinctive scholarly ecumenism. The ease with which scholars today can and do engage critically with one another across the fault-lines and the trenches of earlier eras is a contemporary delight and blessing. The responsibility of those of us who listen to such critical wisdom and such wise criticism is to take these concepts into the encounter of reconciliation in order to: banish ignorance; underwrite respect; accelerate comprehension; facilitate change of mind and heart in an emotionally divided Ireland.’

A talk entitled ‘500 Years after Luther: the Reformation and its Legacy in Kerry’ was given at the recent meeting of the Kerry Archæological & Historical Society at the Rose Hotel in Tralee by the Venerable Simon J Lumby, Archdeacon of Limerick and Rector of Killarney. The talk was very well received. Because many people couldn’t attend it was decided to repeat the talk

in St Mary's, Killarney, on Friday November 3rd at 8pm.

In his talk, Archdeacon Lumby outlined the coincidental events in the period 1517–1530 that led both to the Reformation in Europe and the establishment of the Church of England & Ireland. He highlighted how the theological underpinnings of the Reformation did not penetrate to the indigenous Irish because of a lack of vernacular written material. At the same time government of the Irish rode on the back of the renaissance drive to educate the masses but in a tongue foreign to them. Both are primary reasons why the Irish didn't follow the religion of their leaders (the 'fate' of all other European countries). In addition the drive to dissolve the monasteries neutered the Church of England in Ireland of its itinerant preachers.

Despite being on the outer edge of things, Kerry both suffered and avoided in equal measure. It suffered the draconian attempts of legislators to subjugate the populace on the back of the Reformist agenda. It avoided many of the theological benefits of the Reformation because of a lack of indigenous clergy capable of reaching the widely spread population. The full paper is available at : www.limerick.anglican.org/the-reformation-and-its-legacy-in-kerry

Church may be in the midst of a tectonic shift, Bishop Miller

Change was the theme of Bishop Harold Miller's Presidential Address to the Down and Dromore Diocesan Synod in Moira Parish Centre on 19th October.

The bishop suggested that in this 500th anniversary year of the Protestant Reformation, the Church may be in the midst of another tectonic shift and went on to offer some thoughts about how we might live faithfully as Christians.

Bishop Harold's suggestion centred round a theory where the history of the Church is described as a 500-yearly pattern of massive change or, in a phrase popularised by American lay theologian, Phyllis Tickle, 'rummage sales'.

The bishop described these as times when "things which have gathered around the Church but have become tired, no longer meaningful or useful; things which have lost their focus, as we would beautifully say in Ulster, are 'rid out'.

"Do we dare recognise that we might be in the middle of one of these 'rummage sales', or

tectonic times of change at this period of history?”

As evidence of huge change in the Church, Bishop Harold highlighted the decline of the Reformed Tradition in the Western World; the irrelevance of denominations among the young; the rise of Pentecostal/Charismatic church networks; the recentring of worldwide Christianity in the South; and a new cynicism about the Church, its institutions, structures and authority figures.

The bishop finished with some thoughts about how are we to live as Christians, in a way that is faithful to Christ, at a time of potential tectonic change.

He said firstly that we should not be surprised if we feel disorientated, and that: “Disorientation can throw us in dependence on the Lord as our compass, in the way that nothing else can”. Nor should we think that change is necessarily a bad thing; indeed it often reenergizes the Church.

Bishop Harold urged synod members to “Know what the unchangeable things are – where your authority lies,” and to “hold on to what is good.” He continued: “The Church of Ireland confesses the truth of the Scriptures, in liturgy, creeds and

articles. These really matter. If we have no ‘red lines’ we should be very concerned indeed!”

He encouraged Christian engagement in the public square and a willingness to understand the culture of the day and challenge it. The bishop concluded with a reminder to trust in the sovereignty of God. He said: “Things may never be quite the same again, but God is gathering all who bow the knee to Christ, and, even in their brokenness and frailty, his eternal purposes are being fulfilled“.

Change in the diocese

Bishop Harold noted that 2016 had been a year of major change as the diocese moved from a shared administrative structure to one where both Down and Dromore and Connor each have a dedicated floor in Church House and a separate staff team.

He introduced two new faces at the top table – Diocesan Secretary Roy Lawther and Finance Officer Brian Lavery. Later in the morning, Roy Lawther reported on his work to update and digitise parish boundary maps. New maps will eventually be available to all parishes as well as a free online facility that will allow them to view census information for their area.

As well as welcoming new faces in this triennial year, the synod said farewell and thank you to Sir Anthony Campbell PC, who is stepping down as Chancellor to the Diocese after 20 years of service. Following a presentation to Sir Anthony, the bishop announced that former High Court Judge, Sir Anthony Hart, had accepted the invitation to become Chancellor.

New Youth and Children's Ministry staff in Armagh

The Diocese of Armagh has welcomed David Brown as its new Development Officer for Youth and Children's Ministry.

David is married to Wendy with two young adult children (Tom, 20) and Poppy (17), and has been in Christian youth ministry since 1992 after graduating from the University of Ulster in Youth and Community work.

David's career/ministry has included work with the Corrymeela Community, as the Archbishop of Canterbury's Youth Advisor, and from 2002 to 2013 as the Director of the Church of Ireland Youth Department. Latterly, David has worked as

the Lay Training Co-ordinator for the Church of Ireland Theological Institute.

He brings extensive youth and children's experience to this new role with Armagh Diocese but is keen to point out that the 'L' plates are back on with much to learn!

Alongside family and work commitments, David is a keen cyclist, loves skiing and an avid Ulster and Ireland Rugby supporter.

Sr. Anne Griffin short-listed for Dóchas 2017 Humanitarian Award

Sr. Anne Griffin – a member of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary – is short-listed for this year's Dóchas Humanitarian Award. For the past 40 years Sr. Anne has been working in England, Zambia, and El Salvador. She has been instrumental in highlighting the case of the victims of the massacre at El Mozote during the civil war in El Salvador, and one of the largest massacres to be carried out in Latin America in the latter half of the last century.

In December 1981, over a 1,000 people - mostly children, women and elderly men - were tortured

and killed and many more displaced by state military forces. The surviving victims of the massacre and their families, with the guidance and support of Sr. Anne formed the Promotion of Human Rights Association of El Mozote (Asociación Promotora de Derechos Humanos de El Mozote, APDHEM) as an initiative to seek redress and justice.

Sr. Anne accompanied the people as they prepared for the case of El Mozote to be heard at the sitting of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in Ecuador in April 2012. Following their long struggle for justice, there was a landmark ruling by the court that El Salvador should investigate the massacre and that the perpetrators should be brought to justice.

Under the court ruling, the government has five years to implement a programme of reparation. Sr. Anne, along with the Human Rights Association, has been working to try and ensure that the government complies with the ruling. The reparation programme includes housing for the victims in their home village where everything was destroyed, education where due to the high levels of poverty many families are unable to educate their children, health where the psychological effects of the massacre have

left the majority of the people with chronic physical and psychological illnesses, and a full register of those massacred, survivors, and displaced.

In 2015, there was a reversal of the amnesty for those who committed war crimes. Court cases involving the perpetrators are currently ongoing and the long struggle for justice by Sr. Anne and APDHEM is finally bearing fruit for the victims and their families.

During President Higgins' state visit to El Salvador in 2013, he along with then Minister of State for Overseas Aid, Joe Costello, met with Sr. Anne and some of the families of the victims of the massacre.

C of E Bishops under pressure to act as Hereford Diocese calls for official services for gay couples

Pressure is mounting on the Church of England to adopt a formal liturgy for gay weddings after one diocese passed a landmark motion calling on bishops to act.

Hereford Diocesan Synod overwhelmingly voted on Thursday to call for official prayers and a dedication service for same-sex couples after their civil partnership or marriage.

The call mirrors the CofE's provision for divorced couples where – despite the Church holding to the teaching that marriage is a 'permanent and lifelong union of one man with one woman' – clergy can carry out blessings and formal dedication for couples getting remarried.

The Hereford vote stops short of full-blown gay weddings in church but bishops warned beforehand it will increase pressure for a wholesale change in the CofE's definition of marriage.

'Given that the Church of England in part defines its doctrine through its authorised liturgies, even if this service did not amount to a change in marriage, it would increase pressure towards such a change,' Hereford Bishop's Council warned delegates in a briefing paper before the vote.

The motion insists offering the service for gay couples would be optional, stating: 'It would contribute to a "mixed economy" in which different viewpoints could continue to exist.'

But the Bishop's Council warned before the vote that any result would cause 'pain' to either traditionalists or progressives.

'If the motion is approved, it will be experienced by others as a rejection of faithfulness to Scripture, and may lead those who hold the traditional position to feel unwanted in our diocese,' it said.

Now it has been formally adopted by Hereford Diocese, the motion will go to a vote at the ruling general synod which next meets in February in London. While it may not be scheduled to be debated in the immediate future, it cannot be removed from the agenda 'until debated or resolved otherwise'.

The vote will send shockwaves around the Church of England and the wider worldwide Anglican Communion and will accelerate calls from some traditionalists for a separate Anglican structure in the UK.

Already a 'missionary bishop' from the conservative pressure group GAFCON has been planted to oversee conservative parishes in the UK and Europe who do not want to come under the authority of their official local bishop.

But the progressive lobby OneBodyOneFaith in the Church welcomed the move, describing it as 'a small step as we continue to journey together'.

A statement read: 'Of central importance is the principle of not compelling anyone to act against their conscience - but at the same time permitting those who wish to celebrate and affirm faithful and committed relationships, to act with integrity too.'

Pope Francis praises John Wesley for leading people to 'knowledge of Jesus Christ'

Methodism founder John Wesley brought many people to Christ through prayer and Bible reading, Pope Francis has said.

Speaking with leaders of the World Methodist Council, Pope Francis praised 50 years of dialogue between the Catholic and Methodist churches, Vatican Radio **reports**.

“We are no longer strangers,” he said, but rather, through our shared Baptism, “members of the household of God”.

Speaking about John Wesley, the 18th-century Anglican clergyman who founded the Methodist



movement, Pope Francis said his example converted many people to God.

“We cannot fail to rejoice” when the Holy Spirit works through other Christian denominations, the Pope added, as they “also help us grow closer to the Lord.”

However, he concluded by saying we cannot grow in holiness without “growing in communion”.

“Let us prepare ourselves with humble hope and concrete efforts for that full recognition which will enable us to join one another in the breaking of bread together.”

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