



Presbyterian Moderator visits army chaplains



The Moderator met the Chaplain General Rev Dr David Coulter at headquarters in Andover. Dr Coulter is originally from Dundonald. Has served firstly as a regular soldier and later became a chaplain. He is currently a minister of the Church of Scotland.

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) Rt. Rev. Dr. Noble McNeely has returned from a four-day pastoral visit to England this week (23-26 April) where he spent time with the PCI Army Chaplains. He also visited the Headquarters of the Royal



“Padre Ivan Linton accompanied me on my visit to St Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment, Clive Barracks, Tern Hill. Ivan has a significant pastoral relationship with soldiers of all ranks”, said Very Rev Dr. Noble McNeely, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland when visiting PCI Army Chaplains this week.

welfare needs of soldiers and their families, providing guidance and spiritual direction at critical times. They are very deserving of our prayers.”

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has a long pastoral association with the Army at Regular and Reserve levels, and with the various youth organisations such as Cadets. As one of the recognised ‘Sending Churches’, PCI has ‘sent’, or provided chaplains to the military in the UK for over 100 years.

Army Chaplains’ Department (RACHD) where he had the opportunity to meet the Chaplain-General, the most senior chaplain in the British Army, who acknowledged the immense contribution of PCI’s padres.

Praising the work of the chaplains that he had met, Dr. McNeely said, “It was a privilege to meet our padres serving with 1st Battalion Royal Irish Regiment and other units this week. I have referred before to the ‘unique kind of ministry’ that forces chaplaincy is and once again I discovered very dedicated chaplains who are faithful to the values of pastoral ministry and committed to the soldiers physical and spiritual health.

“It is important that the Church realises the pressures that serving chaplains experience as they deal with numerous

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There are currently a total of just over 200 men and women in the British Army serving as full and part-time chaplains. They neither carry weapons, nor bear arms. Eight of these are PCI ministers. The Royal Army Chaplains' Department has been responsible for ministering to soldiers and their families in times of war and peace since 1796.

During his visit the Moderator met the current Chaplain-General to Her Majesty's Land Forces, Rev. Dr. David Coulter, a Church of Scotland chaplain who is originally from Northern Ireland.

Meeting at the RACHD Headquarters in Andover, Hampshire, Dr. Coulter said, "It is always an honour to meet the Moderator as it affords me the opportunity to thank the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for its generosity in allowing its ministers to put themselves forward for service as Army Chaplains.

"Along with Dr. McNeely, I would like to acknowledge the immense contribution of the Church to the Army over the years, with its six regular Chaplains and two reserve Chaplains who are currently serving, and like all our Chaplains, they provide exemplary pastoral service to the men and women currently serving in the Army.

"The Moderator acknowledged that there is a strong and proud tradition of Irish Presbyterians providing excellent pastoral care. In doing so they are being ambassadors for their Church. We hope that this tradition will continue and it encourages ministers to discern a call to military chaplaincy."

During his visit Dr. McNeely took part in the commissioning service for three new non-PCI chaplains at Ampert in Hampshire, where he read from 2 Thessalonians 3:6-14.

Reflecting on his visit, the Moderator said, "As a Church we should be persistent in prayer for the chaplains in the Army and across the services as they meet the needs of service personnel and proclaim the gospel of God's grace in times of peace and conflict. It is also important that we ensure that we pray for the husbands, wives and families of chaplains as they minister in all kinds of everyday and extraordinary circumstances."

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During his visit, the convener of PCI's Forces Chaplaincy Panel, Rev. Professor Patton Taylor, accompanied Dr. McNeely. A former Army Reserve Chaplain himself, Professor Taylor served in different parts of the world, including Afghanistan.

In the week preceding the Moderator's visit to England, Presbyterians undertook a 'Battlefield Tour' of sites based around Ypres and the Somme, in Belgium and France. Organised by the Forces Chaplaincy Panel, the principle focus of the tour was to lay wreaths at the resting places of three Presbyterian ministers and one missionary who made the supreme sacrifice during the First World War.

Belfast couple to work in Cambodia with vulnerable children living in bad conditions



Two Willowfield parishioners are about to take the momentous step of moving to Cambodia. Mark and Liz Fetherstonhaugh first developed a concern for the country in 2008 and have been regularly visiting and taking volunteer teams since then. Now they are planning to settle permanently and establish their first day-care
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centre for preschool children at risk from exploitation and trafficking.

Eighteen months ago the couple founded a charity, Eggshell Cambodia, to provide protection and bring hope to some of the huge numbers of

vulnerable children living in indescribably bad conditions.

“Most of the NGOs focus on education and the slightly older children so Eggshell Cambodia is unique in its outreach to under-fives,” explains Mark. “These children are highly vulnerable – an unscrupulous neighbour or even family member may well attempt to sell them. There is no running water, sanitation or electricity and the community is swamped by sewage and rubbish. Children as young as one or two are left on their own as their parents try to earn a living. Small children may be drugged, tethered or simply left to fend for themselves for hours on end while their parents are away. Many of the teenagers and young adults are addicted to alcohol and drugs and they’re likely to prey upon and exploit the smaller children to fund their habits.”

In January, the Board of Trustees gave Mark and Liz the go-ahead to move to Cambodia and establish the first of what they hope are many, preschool day-care centres. They have left their jobs and were commissioned on Sunday 15 April in Willowfield Parish Church. They move to Phnom Penh on Wednesday 25 April.

“After a couple of days to get over the jet-lag we will hit the ground running; we’ve intensive language classes, extensive meetings, a home to find and an unbelievable amount of bureaucracy,” they said. “We return to Belfast for the month of July and then back out, the plan being that if God lines everything up we open the first

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Eggshell Cambodia Day–Care Centre around the start of September.”

The day–care centre will be situated where there is very little infrastructure, few jobs, high drink and drug dependency, and a great many “at risk” children. Each child will benefit from basic healthcare, nutrition, clean clothing, early learning education and play, all in a stable environment where they can be made aware of “stranger danger” and enjoy healthy relationships. All of this will give the children a solid start, preparing them for school and life in their community.

Where possible Eggshell Cambodia will source as much product and labour as possible from within the village, the intention being that the day–care centre will become increasingly self–sufficient, locally run but centrally accountable, empowering and enriching the local community. Mark and Liz’s vision is that this centre will be the first of a large network.

Moving to Cambodia has, however, a bitter–sweet taste, especially as they leave behind Liz’s elderly parents and anticipate becoming grandparents for the first time in July.

“We want to say a special thank you to our families for all the support, encouragement and prayers that they have given us in what they are about to do. Please pray for us as we set out.”

Institution and installation of new Dean for Kildare Union and Newbridge Union

L to R - Dean Tim Wright, Bishop Pat Storey and Revd Ian Gamble

The parishioners of Newbridge Union and Kildare Union have welcomed their new rector. Revd Tim Wright was instituted by Bishop Pat Storey on the evening of 23rd April, in St Brigid’s Cathedral, Kildare. She also installed him as the new Dean, at the same service.

Dean Wright was joined by his wife Karen and their family, as well as friends. Clergy from across the diocese, former colleagues, local, political, representatives, senior Garda and army officers and



L to R - Dean Tim Wright, Bishop Pat Storey and Revd Ian Gamble

many others joined together to wish the new Dean and Karen well. The preacher at the service was Revd Ian Gamble.

After the Service a reception was held in the Keadeen Hotel, Newbridge. The reception closed with speeches of welcome for Tim and Karen, as they begin their new life in the dioceses.

Two gay priests on shortlists to become bishops

Openly gay Anglican priest Very Rev Dr Jeffrey John is once again in the running to become a bishop.

He's been named on the short list for the role in the Diocese of Brechin in Scotland.

The development comes 15 years after he was nominated as Bishop of Reading but stood aside after the then Archbishop of

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Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams asked him to withdraw from the process in order to avoid a church split.

Reports since suggest he's been put forward a number of times but to fall at the final hurdle. Last year his nomination as Bishop of Llandaff was blocked by Welsh bishops.

Jeffrey John entered into a civil partnership with Grant Holmes in 2006 after a 30 year relationship. They have stated their relationship is celibate.

There are three other candidates left in the selection process to become Bishop of Brechin. The election is due to take place in June.

Commenting on the short-list of candidates the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, Most Rev Mark Strange, said: "I thank members of the Preparatory Committee for the work they have done and am delighted that four candidates are being nominated to the Electoral Synod.

[Read here](#)

Christian Today adds: <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/senior-gay-cleric-jeffrey-john-shortlisted-to-be-bishop-in-scottish-episcopal-church/128764.htm>

A conservative source in the Scottish Episcopal Church told Christian Today the decision to shortlist both John and Newlands was 'extraordinary'.

'They have not listened to anything that has been said,' he said pointing to concerns raised by the more traditionalist provinces around the world who make up the majority of the 80 million strong Anglican Communion.

'It is a statement of intent.'

If elected John and Newlands would probably attend the forthcoming Lambeth Conference in 2020, a ten-yearly gathering of bishops from all around the communion. This could lead to further boycotts from conservative African bishops, such as Nicholas

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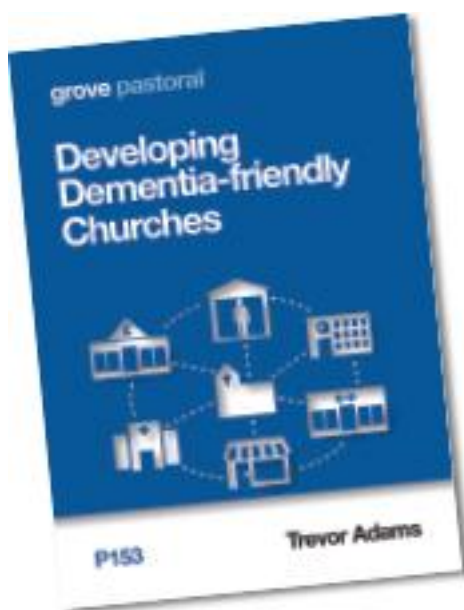
Okoh, primate of All Nigeria, and Stanley Ntagali, primate of Uganda.

Standing alongside John for the diocese of Brechin is Dr Francis Bridger, rector of St Mary's Church, Broughty Ferry, Markus Dünzkofer, rector of St John the Evangelist Church, Edinburgh, and Andrew Swift, rector of Holy Trinity Church, Dunoon.

As well as Newlands, Dr Charlotte Methuen, professor of church history at the University of Glasgow and honorary assistant priest at St Margaret's church, and Ian Paton, rector of Old St Paul's Church, Edinburgh, are shortlisted for the diocese of St Andrew, Dunkeld & Dunblane.

The candidates for both dioceses will go before an electoral body made up of local clergy and churchgoers on May 26, before a decision is made on June 2.

Developing Dementia-friendly Churches



A publication by Grove Books (£3.95). Dementia can pose challenges for Christians, not least evangelicals who may view cognition as the way people understand the Bible and come to faith. But how should we respond to and come alongside people with dementia?

This booklet urges Christians to make their churches dementia-friendly places_ that demonstrate kingdom values and practices to

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all, especially those with cognitive impairment. It explores how churches can welcome and support those with dementia and their carers, enabling them to be participants not just in their local community, but in their own lives.

Dr Trevor Adams (dementiafriendlychurch@gmail.com) runs Passionate Dementia Care, a dementia training and consultancy business that supports churches seeking to become dementia friendly. Trevor has taught nursing for many years, written extensively on dementia care, and lectured at universities and conferences in the UK and overseas.

Upcoming BBC Broadcast services from Enniskillen and Downpatrick Cathedrals

BBC Radio Ulster's Morning Service on Sunday, 6th May, will be a Service of Holy Communion from St Macartin's Cathedral, Enniskillen. The celebrant will be the Very Revd Kenneth Hall, Dean of Clogher, and the preacher will be the Revd Chris MacBruithin, curate at St Macartin's Cathedral. The Service will be broadcast from 10.15am.

A Service of Holy Communion for Pentecost will be broadcast from Down Cathedral on BBC Radio 4 (at 8.10am) and BBC Radio Ulster (at 10.15am) on Sunday, 20th May.

The Service will take the theme of 'Thy Kingdom Come', the Archbishop of Canterbury's prayer initiative. It will be led by the Very Revd Henry Hull, Dean of Down, and the preacher will be the Revd Adrian Dorrian, Bishop's Curate with the Lecale Area Mission Partnership. The service will be available after broadcast here.

RAF100 service in Belfast cathedral will be a poignant day for rector

On Sunday April 29 the Royal Air Force will mark 100 years since its foundation at a service of commemoration and thanksgiving in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast.

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L to R - Great grandfather, Flight Lieutenant Albert E Dark; grandfather., Group Captain A Edward Dark, CBE, and father, Squadron Leader Michael E Dark, in 2005.

It will be a poignant day for many, particularly for the surviving veterans of World War Two who will be attending, and for the families of those veterans no longer with us, who will also be at the service.

Among them will be the Rev Nicholas Dark, rector of Magheragall Parish. He will be accompanied by his wife Bronwen, their children, Alison, Andrew and Claire, and his mother Ann, who will be travelling from Castlerock.

Nicholas is the direct descendant of three generations who served, father to son, since the foundation of the Royal Air Force on April 1 1918.

Nicholas' great grandfather, Flight Lieutenant Albert E Dark, received his commission on that date, having served in the Royal Navy and Royal Naval Air Service throughout World War One.

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The Royal Naval Air Service and Royal Flying Corps were amalgamated, to form the Royal Air Force, the first independent Air Force in the world. Albert served until he was injured during the Battle of Britain. He died in 1942.

His son Group Captain A Edward Dark, CBE, Nicholas' grandfather, graduated as a pilot from the Royal Air Force College, Cranwell, and received his commission in 1928. He served throughout World War Two.

Eddie worked with Barnes Wallis on the development of the bouncing bomb of 'Dambuster' fame, amongst other experimental armaments; he received the military CBE in recognition of this work.

He was a member of the United Kingdom Scientific Team sent to Japan to investigate the results of the Atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He retired in 1956, and died in 1997.

His son, Squadron Leader Michael E Dark, Nicholas' father, graduated as a pilot from the Royal Air Force College, Cranwell, and received his commission in 1952.

Mike flew, as Captain, on the Short Sunderland Flying Boat, on 209 squadron, Far East Flying Boat Wing, completing 65 sorties in the Korean War, and the Malayan Emergency.

On returning to the United Kingdom, he joined 230 Squadron, Coastal Command, stationed at RAF Pembroke Dock, again flying the Sunderland. The squadron was detached to RAF Castle Archdale on a number of occasions.

Following a conversion course at RAF Kinloss, he flew the Shackleton MK3, as Flight Commander on 201 squadron, stationed at RAF St Mawgan. The role of Coastal Command squadrons during the Cold War was the Air and Maritime protection of the United Kingdom.

Michael died on February 2 2016. He and Ann have four children. Nicholas is the only one to remain in Northern Ireland. Other family members will attend commemoration events elsewhere in the UK. The family plans to place memorial stones in memory of Albert,

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Eddie and Michael in the National Memorial Arboretum, and will all attend a service of dedication there next year.

Nicholas, a Connor ordinand from the Church of the Resurrection, the Church of Ireland Student Centre at Queen's University, was ordained in June 1998, and served as curate in Ballyhome Parish. He has been rector of Magheragall Parish since 2005. He is also Honorary Chaplain to The Aircrew Association NI, and Honorary Chaplain to the Royal British Legion, Lisburn Branch.

The service in Belfast Cathedral on Sunday begins at 3.30pm.

