



Cultural change: Australian Anglican Bishop Greg Thompson of Newcastle Diocese has criticised the emergence of a "para Anglican Communion" led by the conservative Anglican Sydney diocese. He says there is a need for cultural change in the church - see report this issue.

1916 saw exceptional risk-taking and violence become commonplace, PCI seminar told

A specialist in the area of religion and martyrdom and the interfaces between religion, nationalism and national identity, Professor Wolffe said that



Very Rev. Dr. Norman Hamilton, Convener of PCI's Council for Church in Society who chaired the meeting, with Professor John Wolfe and the Very Rev. Professor Stafford Carson Principal of Union Theological College who hosted the event.

he hoped he could contribute some distinctive and useful perspectives on what has already been a well-informed conversation around the events of 1916.

“The importance of understanding the events of 1916 in their historical context of total war, in which exceptional risk-taking and violence became commonplace, has led people then and now to look for deeper meanings.

Professor Wolffe speaking at an evening seminar organised by the Presbyterian Church, said, “During and immediately after the First World War martyrdom and sacrifice were common cultural currency across the UK, Ireland and beyond. It was understandable that people needed to find some sense of meaning and purpose in the otherwise senseless slaughter of so many young lives.

“In a society where Christian influence was much more pervasive than in our own, it was probably inevitable that Christian, nationalistic and community associations would become confused,” he said.

Professor Wolffe also said that one of the striking contrasts for him was the language and use of martyrdom in the Republican tradition, as opposed to the language of sacrifice by the Unionist community.

“With the probable exception of Patrick Pearse, the leaders of the Easter Rising did not set out to be martyrs; they have been constructed as such after the event. On the other hand, the sense that the dead of the Ulster Division were the victims not only of their German enemies, but of their false friends the British generals and politicians who sent them into battle and failed to support them, helps to explain the powerful

resonance of their legacy in loyalist areas who feel a similar sense of betrayal.

Thanking Professor Wolffe for his presentation, Rev Dr. Norman Hamilton said that the Church has a unique role to play in today's public square across a number of issues and areas of policy and debate. He continued "I hope our series of events around 1916 is contributing to the ongoing public discussion around the centenaries. The events themselves need to be seen in the political and social context not just in Ireland and the UK, but also in the wider European context of the time."

The full text of Professor Wolffe's talk can be [downloaded here](#).

NI's first interdenominational school could be west of the Bann

The first interdenominational school in Northern Ireland could be set up in the west of the province, the Belfast Telegraph reports.

The concept was first suggested at a meeting of Stormont's education committee last February.

A public meeting to gauge support for the idea in the local area was held in Omagh on Wednesday.

A Department of Education official told the meeting that more than half of the schools in Omagh and in Co Fermanagh had fewer pupils than the recommended sustainable number.

The proposed new category of school would be managed jointly by the Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland and Methodist and Presbyterian Churches.

It would be faith-based and would have a Christian ethos.

Maintained schools are currently managed by the Council for Catholic Maintained Education, and controlled schools take input from the main Protestant churches.

The meeting in Omagh heard some existing schools were interested in changing. However, no names were revealed.

Stormont's education committee heard last February that the Department of Education was drawing up guidance for the new category of school.

The plan was revealed as clerics from the Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches gave evidence to the committee's inquiry into shared and integrated education.

They said the initiative for what they termed a "multi-faith school" was inspired by requests from grassroots bodies. The Protestant clerics said they had been in talks with Catholic bishops over the matter and that almost all elements had been agreed.

The inspiration for the interdenominational school came from Hope Academy in Liverpool.

Dr Peter Hamill from the Transferor Representatives' Council, which represents the main Protestant Churches, pointed out that interdenominational schools were not the same as integrated schools.

"In a jointly managed school, it would be very clear that this would have a Christian ethos," he said.

"It would have a clear policy on how worship would be conducted and how faith was reflected in the running of the school."

The proposed school's board of governors would also have equal representation from the Catholic and Protestant Churches.

The meeting heard that a small number of schools were exploring mergers in order to be jointly run by the Churches.

That would involve an existing controlled schools amalgamating with Catholic maintained schools.

The meeting was also told that schools which had small pupil numbers or questions over their sustainability were most likely to consider such a merger.

However, other more viable schools may also consider becoming joint Church institutions - those involved in shared education projects, for example.

Education Minister John O'Dowd would ultimately have to approve the establishment of any such venture.

Around 40 people are reported to have attended the meeting on Wednesday night, which was organised by the Rural Centre for Shared Education.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/nis-first-interdenominational-school-could-be-west-of-the-bann-34487319.html>



Irish Council of Churches looks for new General Secretary

The Irish Council of Churches (ICC) and the Irish Inter–Church Meeting (IICM) work together under the title: Churches in Ireland – Connecting in Christ. They seek to develop opportunities for Ireland’s churches to work together, to provide a Christian voice in society and so witness to their common belief in Jesus Christ. The IICM is the way in which the ICC churches and the Roman Catholic Church collaborate together.

The ICC currently has 14 member churches and is one of the longest serving, established national ecumenical bodies in the world. It has a proud track record of addressing issues of justice, peace and integration as well as facilitating collaboration on key contemporary priorities.

Job Description

Job Title: General Secretary, Irish Council of Churches

Location: Inter Church Centre, 48 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast with responsibilities throughout Ireland

Salary Scale: £33,287 – £41,586

Responsible to: Joint Management Committee of the Irish Council of Churches and the Irish Inter–Church Meeting

Line Manager: President of the Irish Council of Churches

Interviews: 14th April 2016

The closing date for applications is Monday 21st March 2016, at noon 12 noon. For more information and an application pack visit the [Irish Council of Churches website](#) or email info@irishchurches.org

The General Secretary is the senior executive officer of the ICC and also holds the position of joint secretary of the IICM. The main duties will include, but may not be confined to:

- Providing analytical and strategic analysis and direction to inter–church relations and ecumenism in Ireland.
- Serving as secretary to the ICC and IICM and ensuring that agreed decisions are carried out.
- Servicing, with other staff members, all associated committees, liaison and working groups meeting under the ICC/IICM.
- Line–managing other staff, including those who may be based outside the office.
- Overseeing and co–ordinating the work of externally funded projects.
- Maintaining close relationships with member churches and with relevant inter–church bodies.
- Furthering ecumenism nationally and locally by implementing an agreed vision and strategy for enhancing Irish ecumenism.
- Developing relationships and co–ordinating dialogues with government and relevant civil society partners.
- Assisting in the co–ordination, development and dissemination of shared policies and position papers .
- Representing the churches and co–ordinating inter–church representation as requested by the leadership.
- Ensuring overall financial stability, streamlining costs as appropriate and seeking to maintain and increase support.

www.irishchurches.org

Variety in Spring Issue of C of I journal *Search*

The spring issue of the Church of Ireland journal, *Search*, edited by Canon Ginnie Kennerley, was issued at the weekend.

An excerpt from the late Dr Valerie Jones' forthcoming book, *'Rebel Prods of 1916'*, features. The story of a North Dublin family playing a front line role in the Easter Rising is offered by her daughter, Dr Heather Jones, who has been preparing her mother's text for publication later this year.

Given the fall-out from the January primates' meeting in Canterbury, which threatened to marginalise America's Episcopal Church (TEC) on account of its acceptance of same-sex marriage, TEC leader Bishop Michael Curry's gracious restraint and steadfastness has impressed many. Two views of the first black presiding bishop of TEC are offered in this issue, one by a TEC priest who is also black, one by a white woman who worked with him closely in North Carolina.

The General Synod Select Committee on Human Sexuality in the Context of Christian

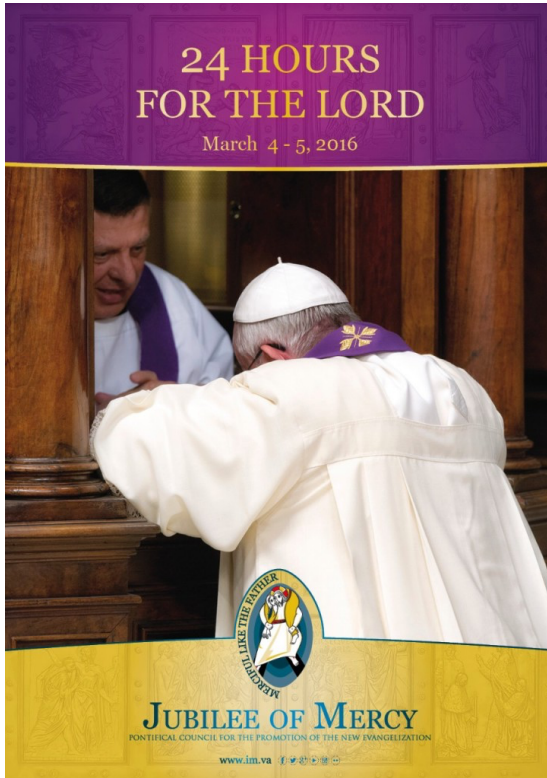
Belief's 'Guide', which seeks to be a resource to assist the Church in listening, learning and dialogue about same-sex relationships between Christians, is now available. An interview with the Committee's chairman, the Very Revd John Mann, Dean of Belfast, aims to show the way ahead.

Also in the field of relationship between Christians, the matter of domestic violence is confronted, with some shocking results. To what extent is violence against women, even clergy wives, tolerated in the Church today? The evidence is alarming.

This issue also offers a new view on 'election' rooted in the Genesis story of Jacob and Esau, and an exploration by a leading imam of the Qur'an's attitude to Christianity. The In Retrospect article reflects on the life and witness of John Ward Armstrong (1915–87), successively Dean of St Patrick's cathedral, Dublin, Bishop of Cashel and Archbishop of Armagh.

24 Hours for the Lord in Irish Catholic Dioceses

The Pontifical Council for the New Evangelisation is inviting dioceses and parishes



across the world to take part in the '24 Hours for the Lord' initiative for 2016. The initiative was received with great enthusiasm when it was introduced in 2014 and it will be celebrated again this year from Friday 4 to Saturday 5 March.

It was suggested to dioceses that people should be able to find special opportunities during these days for prayer and the Sacrament of

Reconciliation. Pope Francis himself will be participating in the initiative and will preside at a penitential service in Saint Peter's Basilica in order to place the Sacrament of Reconciliation at the centre of the Church's mission of the new evangelisation.

This year's '24 Hours for the Lord' initiative takes place in the context of the [Jubilee Year of Mercy](#).

Irish dioceses have made arrangements for parishioners who would like to participate in the '24 Hours for the Lord' initiative. We will be adding details as they become available to us but in the meantime please check [diocesan websites](#) for information on the event closest to you.

Australian Anglican diocese challenges evangelical Sydney diocese's para-church strategy

In a turnabout from the usual script, the Bishop of Newcastle will not attend the Province of Australia annual bishop's conference because he believes the Diocese of Sydney plans a power play.

The Newcastle Herald [reports](#),
In his letter to [Australian Primate] Archbishop Freier in December, Bishop [Greg] Thompson said while the fellowship of bishops was important, “the environment at the bishops conference is not conducive for furthering our shared sense of ministry together in the Anglican church”.

“I note the recent demand by the Diocese of Sydney to sign up to protocols or they will not attend any further national bishops’ gatherings,” Bishop Thompson said.

“This is a little inconsistent given the protocols of courtesy and recognition of jurisdictions by the Diocese of Sydney which have ceased many years ago.”

Bishop Thompson noted that Sydney Diocese had actively supported the development of conservative and evangelical churches on the Central Coast and in the Hunter without consulting Newcastle Diocese.

More:

Bishop Thompson’s letter followed a Sydney Synod resolution in October against Australia’s first female Anglican Bishop, Kay Goldsworthy,

for appointing an openly gay priest in a long-term relationship with a man to a parish in her diocese of Gippsland.

And, from *Church Times*,

Bishop Thompson said that the resolution meant that he could no longer “simply stand by”. The statement continued: “for over 20 years, we have experienced Anglicans from the Diocese of Sydney establishing church activities in the Diocese of Newcastle in direct competition with our ministries.

“We have learnt to accommodate ourselves to this, but look with great concern on movements such as the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans that are designed to elevate an alternate Anglican jurisdiction in Australia and New Zealand.

“I am looking to the bishops of the Anglican Church of Australia to affirm the importance of being able to express divergent views in common fellowship, as the Anglican Primates did in January. I am also looking to the bishops to affirm the leadership of each bishop within their own diocese.”

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Dublin Archbishop warns of 'abuse of memory' over 1916 Easter Rising

Belfast Telegraph

With the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising just weeks away, the **Church of Ireland** Archbishop of Dublin has warned against an abuse of history.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/dublin-archbishop-warns-of-abuse-of-memory-over-1916-easter-rising-34490124.html>

Academics slam McAleese account of troubles

News Letter

Former Irish president Mary McAleese has been slammed for accusing Britain of blunders in 1969 while failing to mention that Dublin was helping to create PIRA in the same year.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/mcaleese-is-slammed-over-ignoring-dublin-s-ira-role-1-7233446>

Tel

Report that senior Church of England, Roman Catholic, Church in Wales, Methodist, United Reform Church and Salvation Army figures have issued a joint statement opposing the Government's plan to relax Sunday trading laws. In a letter (*see below*) to the *Telegraph*, they warn that plans (the Enterprise Bill is currently going through Parliament) to let large chain

stores open for longer hours would increase the “commodification” of modern life. Bishop of St Albans, Alan Smith, has signed for the CofE.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12176301/Church-leaders-unite-against-new-Sunday-trading-laws.html>

Christian Today

Report on Twitter campaign launched by former Dean of Durham, Michael Sadgrove, to keep Britain in the EU called @Xians4EU. He is quoted saying: "I would love to think that because of their belief in the Church as a sign of unity of the human race, the majority would be in favour of staying in." Article notes that there is also Christians for Britain campaign on social media, in support of Brexit.

Tel

Report that a Christian postgraduate student studying social work at Sheffield University has been expelled from his course, for voicing opposition to gay marriage in a Facebook discussion. Felix Ngole expressed support for Kim Davis, the county clerk from Kentucky in the US who was jailed for refusing to issue marriage licences after the introduction of same-sex unions in September last year. Article notes that the university disciplinary panel concluded that his comment on the Facebook thread would affect his ability to operate in the profession, it was not about his personal views. Andrea Williams of the Christian Legal Centre is quoted.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12176380/Christian-student-expelled-for-opposing-gay-marriage.html>

Tel

Feature on Laurence King (1907-81), an architect well known for his work on the interior design of churches including St Mary Le Bow in London. He is described as an Essex man who knew what a church was for.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/12175433/The-Essex-man-who-knew-what-a-church-was-for.html>

Guard/FT

Report that the Government will continue to report lack of money as a measure of child poverty. Previously it had wanted to remove a statutory duty to publish levels of UK household income as part of the welfare reform and work bill but have now accepted, after opposition including defeat in the House of Lords, that the material deprivation measures should remain protected. *Guardian* notes the contribution of Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler, in the Lords debate.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/feb/26/uk-government-forced-to-retain-household-income-as-measure-of-child-poverty>

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/2c0617e0-dc80-11e5-a72f-1e7744c66818.html?FTCamp=engage/CAPI/webapp/Channel_Moreover//B2B#axzz41MHDniXQ

Exp

Report on comments by BA Chief Exec Willie Walsh who said yesterday that leaving Europe will not have a profound effect on the economy. Article notes other companies and businesses who take the same view including the Church Commissioners “responsible for the Church of England's massive investment portfolio”.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/637212/George-Osbourne-slammed-by-BA-head-over-Brexit-claims>

ITV/EDP

Reports that the Archdeacon of Norwich, the Venerable Jan McFarlane, is to become the next Bishop of Repton in Derby Diocese.

<http://www.itv.com/news/anglia/update/2016-02-26/promotion-for-norfolk-cleric/>

Sun/Eve Stand

Report that Christian occupational therapist Victoria Wastenev, who gave a book to a Muslim colleague and prayed with her, is arguing a decision to discipline her is against her freedom to express religious beliefs. The Christian's lawyers claim an employment tribunal ruling that East London NHS Foundation Trust could take action against Ms Wastenev breaches her human rights. Judgment was reserved at the central London appeal hearing yesterday.

<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/6960543/Christian-warned-over-book-gift-to-Muslim.html>
<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/christian-nhs-suspended-for-giving-book-to-muslim-colleague-mounts-legal-challenge-a3190341.html>

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