



## **Irish, GB and World news bulletin**

**27th January 2014**

### **Press speculation on Hierarchy changes**

**The appointment of Derry's new Catholic Bishop is expected any day now, the 'Derry Journal' has reported. It comments:**

Sources close to the church hierarchy in Ireland believe Pope Francis will make an announcement in the next few weeks - possibly within a fortnight.

The Derry See has been vacant since Bishop Seamus Hegarty retired in 2011 due to ill-health. In the interim, a number of Diocesan Administrators - firstly, Monsignor Eamon Martin and, more recently, Very Rev. Francis Bradley - have been looking after the interests of the parish.

Michael Kelly, an influential commentator on Irish religious affairs, believes an announcement on Dr. Hegarty's successor will be made very shortly.

Mr. Kelly, editor of the 'Irish Catholic' newspaper, thinks the news is "imminent".

Mr. Kelly also believes that Derry-born Archbishop of Armagh, Dr. Eamon Martin, could become Primate of All-Ireland during 2014.

He says Cardinal Sean Brady turns 75 this summer and his resignation as Primate is expected to be accepted, "paving the way" for Archbishop Martin to take over.

### **Presbyterian concern on mental health issue**

**The Irish Presbyterian Church will address mental health problems in relation to Christianity at a conference in Church House, Belfast on Saturday, February 1.**

Billy Kennedy writes in the News Letter - The 'Breaking the Silence' conference will challenge the Church to get involved in promoting the good mental health of society and is aimed particularly at ministers, deaconesses and youth leaders who are being encouraged to take a lead on this issue.

Organised jointly by the board of social witness and the Presbyterian youth assembly SPUD, the conference has come about through the intervention of two SPUD delegates at last year's General Assembly.



***Rev Bobby Liddle***

SPUD stands for speaking, participating, understanding and deciding and is the Presbyterian church assembly for young people.

Helen Forsythe and Helen Macaulay made their intervention at the General Assembly in Londonderry last June in a debate

calling on the Presbyterian church to be supportive of the recommendations proposed by the Bamford Review concerning mental health provision.

They spoke forcefully and movingly about the vital need for churches to be involved in complementing the statutory health and social care provision that the General Assembly agreed to an emergency resolution calling for a Presbyterian event to be organised to raise awareness.

"I have walked with close Christian friends through the shadow of [depression](#), self-harm, suicidal thoughts and eating disorders, and have felt their devastation and frustration," says Helen Macaulay.

"This can be such an overwhelming situation but we must start the conversation. Our congregations should be seen as places of safety, refuge and healing for those who are heavily stigmatised by many other areas of society."

Helen Forsythe said: “There is often a stigma that I can’t suffer from mental health problems and be a Christian. The condition is often compounded with a guilty feeling that, as a Christian, they should be full of joy without realising that the [illness](#) has sapped any joy from their lives.

“As a Church we have a responsibility to act as Jesus would have done, to help ease suffering and to show love and to pray so that people suffering from mental illness do not feel isolated from Christian fellowship but are embraced by it.”

The Rev Bobby Liddle, board of social witness convenor, agrees. “The overarching vision of the Bamford review is that people with a mental illness should be treated in the community and the review outlines many examples of care that the Presbyterian Church should be involved in.

“I am delighted that our young people are taking the lead on this issue, making the church sit up and realise that it has a significant part to play in helping people of all ages in their struggle with mental [illness](#).”

Keynote speaker at the conference will be Dr Ken Yeow, a consultant psychiatrist in eating disorder, and Peter McBride, from the Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health. Information on the conference can be found at [www.pciyac.org](http://www.pciyac.org)

## St Brigid’s Day lecture

**Fr. Timothy Radcliffe, O.P. will be the speaker on 7.30pm in St. Brigid’s Church Windsor Avenue, Belfast.**

Fr. Timothy Radcliffe is a member of the Dominican Community, Blackfriars, Oxford and was Master of the Order, 1992 – 2001. He is the author of a number of books and is internationally renowned as a teacher, preacher and speaker.

He will, in his lecture, reflect on new paths for the Church’s journey in the light of Pope Francis’ recent document “The Joy of the Gospel” (Evangelii Gaudium). All are welcome.

## Divine Healing

Tonight, Monday evening at 8pm in St Anne’s Cathedral, Belfast, the International Divine Healing Ministeries will host service on the theme of

praying for the renewal and revival of the faith in this land. The speaker will be the Ven. David McClay, Rector of Willowfield parish in East Belfast

## **C of I parish receives award for community relations work**

**A Church of Ireland Parish in Garvagh (Errigal & Desertoghill) has been awarded a certificate in recognition of valuable contributions to Good Relations Activity in the Borough of Coleraine in 2012 – 2013. The award is from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.**

The award was received by the Rector, Revd Paul Whittaker, on behalf of the parish. It was presented by the Development Services Unit of Coleraine Borough Council.

Speaking of the award Revd Whittaker said, "This was completely unexpected and the parish is extremely proud to receive it. We are committed to the vision of Derry and Raphoe diocese, Transforming Community Radiating Christ. Part of working this out is by seeking to build community relationships with everyone in our area".

In the past two years the parish has had cross-community St. Patrick celebrations, community litter picks, and Easter Dawn Service. It has also had significant engagement and dialogue with the different parts of the community in its local area. It is considering some kind of cross-community act of remembrance to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the commencement of the First World War in July 2014.

A spokesperson for the diocese of Derry and Raphoe commended the peace building initiatives in the parish. He said "Building peace is about building relationships with our neighbours. Our Christian faith teaches that everyone, regardless of creed, race or politics is our neighbour. We are excited to see the significant steps that have been taken in the parish to build peace with their neighbours.

## **Converting redundant churches**

**In St Thomas' church, Belfast on Thursday evening, at 7.30pm, the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society will host a discussion evening on the topic of converting redundant churches to new use.**

The evening will be chaired by the Archdeacon of Connor, Dr Stephen McBride, and among the speakers will be the Church of Ireland Press Officer,

Dr Paul Harron, who edited the UAHS's 2012 publication, *New Life for Churches in Ireland*.

## **Bishop attends First World War conference**

**The School of History at University College Cork has been hosting an important conference - 'Ireland and the First World War: In Defence of Right, of Freedom and of Religion?' - on Friday, 25th and Saturday, 26th January.**

Bishop Paul Colton attended the official opening of the Conference on the invitation of the Head of the School of History, Professor Geoff Roberts. Dr Colton said:

*This is a subject I am interested in. The Conference is timely, not least as we all reflect in Ireland how best to mark and commemorate the centenaries of these world-changing events inclusively.*

The opening keynote address was given by Dr Andrew Murrison, M.P. (Minister for International Security Strategy in the U.K.). Dr Murrison is also the special representative of Prime Minister David Cameron for the Centenary Commemoration of the First World War.

Afterwards, the opening lecture was given by Professor Gary Sheffield, Professor of War Studies at the University of Wolverhampton.

In addition to the attendance of large numbers of historians, and of members of the public were also: the President of UCC, Dr. Michael Murphy; the Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr Michael of Connell; the chairman of the Governing Body of UCC, Judge Bryan McMahon; the First Secretary at the German Embassy, Mr Harald Seibel; and the Ambassadors of the United Kingdom, Latvia and Belgium.

## **Mission conference**

**The annual spring conference of the Crosslinks missionary society will begin in St Anne's cathedral, Belfast, on Friday evening and will continue on Saturday.**

The theme will be 'The Uniqueness of Christ and his Mission' and the keynote speaker will be Dr Don Carson, Research Professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.





*Dr Andrew Murrison, M.P. (Minister for International Security Strategy, and special representative of PM David Cameron for the Centenary Commemoration of the First World War) chats before the UCC conference opening with the Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, Dr Paul Colton, and the Ambassador of Belgium in Ireland, M. Philippe Roland.*

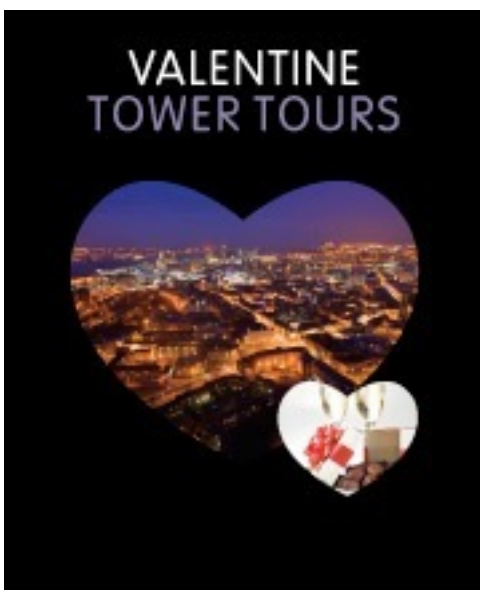
## GB NEWS

### Cathedrals get romantic for Valentine's Day

**Liverpool Cathedral is offering couples the chance to enjoy a glass of bubbly as they take in beautiful views of the city from its tower this Valentine's Day.**

The tower will be open between 5pm and 8pm for the occasion. Tickets cost £5 and champagne and chocolates will be available to enjoy on the night.

Couples who take up the offer are being encouraged to #tweetfromthetower and post pictures of themselves or their view from the top on Valentine's Day at [www.facebook.com/LiverpoolCathedral](http://www.facebook.com/LiverpoolCathedral)



Kevin Stott, Cathedral Retail Manager said: "A twilight trip to the tower is a wonderful experience in itself, but it is also the perfect way to start an evening of Valentine's celebrations. We have also had more than one proposal at the top of the tower over the years."

Over in Manchester, the cathedral will be hosting a special service for couples wanting to reaffirm their commitment to each other.

Couples are invited to come along to the cathedral for 7pm to celebrate and offer their relationship anew to God before they go out and enjoy the rest of their evening together.



Bishop David Walker, Bishop of Manchester, will lead the service.

He said, "I'm expecting Manchester city centre to be pretty lively on St Valentine's Day, full of couples having romantic dinners or just enjoying the night out. It's a great occasion for celebrating the love that holds us together. So to start the evening off, I'm inviting couples to join me at Manchester Cathedral at 7 o'clock.

"There will be a chance to reaffirm the promises we've made and to give thanks for the gift of our lives to each other. We'll hear some prayers and sing a suitable, and well known, hymn or two. We'll be through by 7.30pm.

"That leaves plenty of time to enjoy the rest of the evening, and to enjoy it all the better for having joined in this short celebration of love."

A glass of bubbly will be on offer after the service as couples prepare to go off and celebrate.

## **New Testament scholar NT Wright on Paul and the faithfulness of God**

**King's College Chapel in Central London was packed to capacity as theologians from a variety of faith backgrounds gathered to hear world renowned New Testament scholar NT Wright speak.**

The former Bishop of Durham was launching his eagerly anticipated Paul and the Faithfulness of God books, which have already been widely praised as groundbreaking gamechangers since their launch in October 2013.



*NT Wright speaking on Paul at King's College Chapel*

The evening was organised by Wright's publishers, SPCK, and forms part of a 5-date tour that will also see Wright visit Durham and Edinburgh next month.

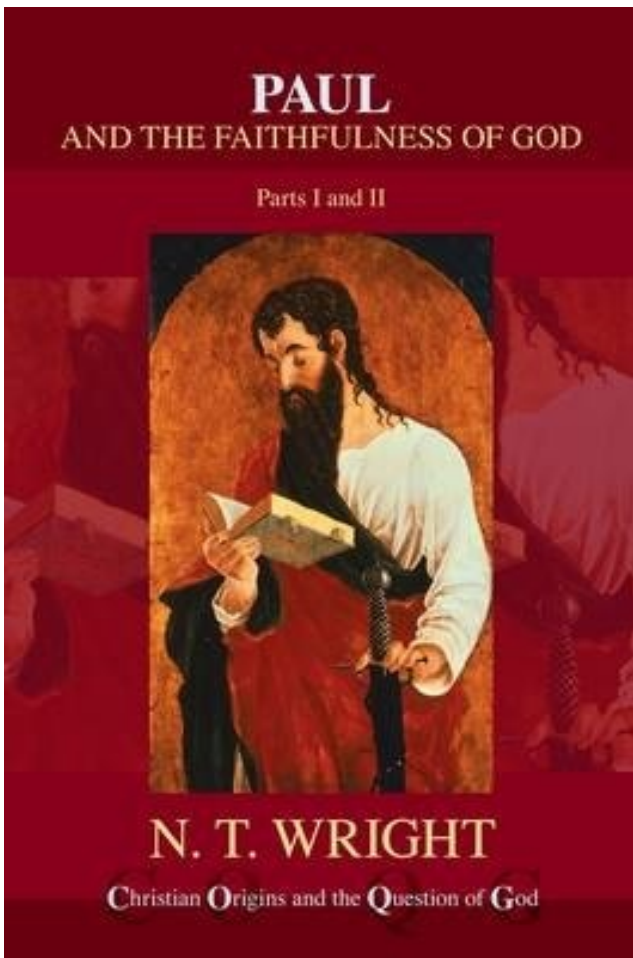
Wright was introduced by the Dean of King's College, the Reverend Professor Richard Burridge and used his 50 minute talk to summarise his 1,600 page volume.

Wright spoke on the four worlds in the time of St Paul - Judaism, Greek philosophy, ancient religion and the Roman Empire. He argued that it was Paul's unique take on each of these worlds that caused riots in the first century, entering a "plural world of many religions" with a "Jewish message of one God".

Moving on to describe part two of his book, Wright looked at the symbols of Paul's worldview. His "provisional conclusion" was "these symbols...the visible tangible thing is the ecclesia (Church), the united and holy community. Unity is easy if you don't care about holiness. Holiness is quite easy if you don't care about community. It's doing the two of them together that's the real trick."

Quoting Romans 12 where Paul talks about a "renewing of the mind", Wright said Paul was not doing theology as an intellectual exercise to organise beliefs but he was teaching churches how to think theologically. "Paul's theology is in the service of enabling the church to be sustained and renewed as a holy and united community."





Wright briefly addressed the topic of Justification – a subject he has debated at length with other scholars and theologians, including well-known American Calvinist pastor John Piper.

"Paul would have agreed with the first century Rabbi who said 'I will make Adam first and if he goes wrong then I'll send Abraham to sort it all out'. In other words the whole Abrahamic story was about this people being called to be the answer to evil... This nomad who is promised a family and the land somehow that's going to be the solution.

"How? Paul says because at last from this man came Israel's representative the Messiah and he has done what that entire narrative is

supposed to do. So for justification you need the story of Abraham. There is enormous resistance to this idea in many different theological quarters but I desist."

He continued: "Justification and being in Christ belong together they are mutually defining, they are not different types of theology to be played off against each other... So many theologians have tried to follow Romans 1-4 as though that is the whole thing of justification. Look at Galatians look at the larger picture, especially Romans 5-8 which is still about justification. You need the spirit to make it complete."

After Wright's talk, Dr Edward Adams was invited to give a response to the book. Admitting he had only read 623 of the 1,600 pages, Dr Adams remarked it was the "biggest book on Paul ever written". He praised Wright for an "immensely impressive" book that impressed in scholarship and style but suggested one reservation, that the construction was too "heavily built" on Romans and perhaps "over-privileged" it.

Adams said that Wright had "thoroughly contextualised Paul" and framed the book in terms of first century Jewish categories.

Thirty minutes of questions and answers followed in which Wright admitted to reading reviews of his books on Amazon.

"One of the reviews on Amazon said: 'It was disappointing that Wright didn't take the time to apply this to contemporary issues and so on' and I thought 'how long did you want the book to be?!'"

Rev Burridge concluded the evening with the words: "Tom Wright is a friend, he's a scholar, he's a writer, he's a priest but as it says in Greek in the stained glass windows here, first and foremost he's a slave of Jesus Christ. Tom, thank you for being with us tonight."

## WORLD NEWS

### Pope says judgments on annulments must be impartial and pastoral

**Addressing the Vatican court primarily responsible for hearing requests for marriage annulments, Pope Francis said judges on church tribunals should show “imperturbable and impartial balance” as well as the “delicacy and humanity proper to a pastor of souls.”**

The Pope made his remarks today to officials of the Roman Rota at a meeting to inaugurate the tribunal's judicial year.

“You are essentially pastors,” he told the officials. “As you carry out your judicial work, do not forget that you are pastors. Behind every file, every position, every case, there are persons who wait for justice.”

Pope Francis has said that church law on marriage is a topic that exemplifies a general need for mercy in the Church today, and that it will be among the subjects of discussion at this October's extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the “pastoral challenges of the family in the context of evangelization.”

In his speech to the Rota, the Pope said a judge on a Church tribunal must sympathise with the “mentality and legitimate aspirations” of the community he serves, and thus render “justice that is not legalistic and abstract, but appropriate to the needs of concrete reality.”

Such a judge “will not be content with superficial knowledge of the reality of the persons who await his judgment, but will recognize the need to understand deeply the situations of the parties,” the Pope said.

“The legal dimension and the pastoral dimension of ecclesial ministry are not in conflict,” Pope Francis said. “The church’s legal activity, which takes the form of service to the truth in justice, has in fact a profoundly pastoral meaning, because it is aimed at the good of the faithful and of the edification of the Christian community.”

## **Churches commemorate Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

**Traditionally celebrated each year between 18 and 25 January (in the northern hemisphere) or at Pentecost (in the southern hemisphere), the week brings together in prayer Christians from diverse confessional backgrounds.**

Since 1968, the liturgical and biblical material for the annual week of prayer has been jointly coordinated by the World Council of Churches (WCC) Faith and Order Commission and by the Roman Catholic Church through the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

This year’s week of prayer materials were prepared by a group of writers led by the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, Montréal, and the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism, Saskatoon, as well as the Atlantic Ecumenical Council and the Canadian Council of Churches in Toronto.

Diverse Canadian contexts were reflected in the service, which begins with prayer to God in the four directions, a practice of Canada’s First Nations communities, and concludes with the sign of peace, exchanged with an expression significant in French Canada, “Don de Dieu,” to express the particular gifts that different Christian churches can share with one another.

The introduction to this years’ theme, referring to the Canadian churches reads, “Living with this diversity, but being faithful to Christ’s desire for the unity of his disciples, has led us to a reflection on Paul’s provocative question in 1 Corinthians: “Has Christ been divided?”

“In faith we respond, ‘No!’ yet our church communities continue to embody scandalous divisions. 1 Corinthians also points us to a way in which we can value and receive the gifts of others even now in the midst of our divisions, and that is an encouragement to us in our work for unity.”

## Prayers around the world

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) in partnership with Christian Aid have celebrated this year’s Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, linking the theme to concern for divisions and Christian faith, as well as to issues of poverty and advocacy of justice.

In Berlin, the Council of Christian Churches in Germany also held an ecumenical event for the week of prayer. Norbert Lammert, president of the German parliament, preached at the event at the St Hedwig's Cathedral, focusing on the theme “One faith in Christ as a bridge between cultures.”

A number of churches in Jerusalem, including churches from Anglican, Orthodox and Catholic traditions, held ecumenical services throughout the week of prayer.

The week of prayer was also celebrated in Republic of Korea, the venue of the WCC’s 10th Assembly, where the National Council of Churches in Korea, along with Catholic churches there, organized events.

Other ecumenical services during the week were also commemorated in Fiji involving the Fiji Council of Churches, as well as Peru, where ecumenical services were held by various churches.

In Geneva, several events were held to commemorate the week of prayer, including a vigil at the St. Pierre Cathedral, and baptism celebrated ecumenically at the major Sunday service.

A service which took place the Ecumenical Centre chapel was organized by the Fellowship of the Christian Churches in Geneva, at which the preacher was Bishop Charles Morerod, Roman Catholic bishop of the Diocese of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg.

Students from the WCC’s Ecumenical Institute in Bossey currently in Rome, also participated in the week of papal celebration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at the Basilica of St. Paul outside the Walls.

