



News Bulletin 28th January 2014

MEP's concern for persecuted Christians

DUP MEP Diane Dodds has raised awareness of persecution against Christians globally after attending the launch of the Open Doors World Watch List for 2014 in the European Parliament in Strasbourg.



News Letter - The World Watch List is the only survey that measures how the religious freedoms of Christians are being upheld globally. Within the EU Parliament, Mrs Dodds has been instrumental in highlighting the plight of Christians worldwide, most recently co-hosting a seminar to publicise the experience of victims of violence in Nigeria.

Mrs Dodds, commenting after the event, said: "It was a great privilege to be able to attend the launch of the Open Doors World Watch List 2014 and to once again highlight global persecution against Christians in Europe.

"In the past five years, I have made it a personal priority to put the spotlight firmly on these violations of religious freedoms. This event provided an excellent opportunity for MEPs from across the 28 member states to come together to help raise awareness and give a voice to those who have been silenced because of persecution," said the MEP.

"It is no surprise, but equally deplorable, that North Korea is the most dangerous place on earth to live as a Christian. The 2014 World Watch List

highlights a worrying trend in that persecution in 36 of the 50 top countries is motivated by Islamic extremism,” she added.



Church leaders with the Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland at St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh at last week's ecumenical service

CMS Ireland Launch 2014 Annual Project

CMS Ireland will launch its annual project for 2014 in Dublin on January 29 in Tallaght Parish Halls at 8.00 pm. This year's project is entitled *God's Big Family* and is a specially produced resource for Sunday schools and youth groups.

The annual project provides original, creative material to help children and young people explore the biblical message of mission and play their part in global mission. Material is provided for at least four sessions with four different age groups.

The 2014 resource is designed to help children and young people discover something of what it means to be part of the global church – God's Big Family. The fundraising element of the project seeks to provide

'wheels' (bicycles, motorbikes or wheelchairs) for all 19 of CMS Ireland's global partners.

At the launch CMS Ireland staff will provide a brief introduction to the various elements of the resource pack, after which there will be a chance to enjoy a cuppa, to chat, to look at the resource and to pick up resource packs. All are welcome.

For more information on the Annual Project or to order your resources, visit CMS Ireland's website www.cmsireland.org.

Drumcondra Ecumenical Celebration

***'Is Christ Divided?'* an Ecumenical Celebration takes place in the church of St John the Baptist, Church Avenue, Drumcondra (behind All Hallows' College) on Friday January 31 at 7.30 pm as part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2014.**

The guest speaker will be Dr Séan Healy SMA, Director Social Justice Ireland. All are welcome.

an Ecumenical Celebration takes place in the church of St John the Baptist, Church Avenue, Drumcondra (behind All Hallows' College) on Friday January 31 at 7.30 pm as part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2014. The guest speaker will be Dr Séan Healy SMA, Director Social Justice Ireland. All are welcome.

The Church in the Public Square?

The Church in the Public Square? is a conference organized under the auspices of Union Theological College and will be held in Assembly Buildings on Thursday, 30th January 2014 commencing at 10.30 am.

The organisers state - It seeks to bring together a number of leading thinkers in the UK and from our local community to consider the role which Christians and the Church can play as we seek to move forward as a community.

Those who have lived through the second half of the twentieth century will be aware of the seismic shift that has taken place in terms of morality and ethical standards. The changing scene has meant that those who hold to a traditional Christian position feel decidedly uncomfortable and marginalized as our society, and increasingly its major institutions, reflect a secular point of view which conflicts with their Christian principles. Not only has the Christian voice become incomprehensible in many ears, but it is often hated and opposed.

What should Christians do, and how should they respond to these changes? In particular, what role does the Christian church have to play in the debates that are taking place on a whole range of issues from education to euthanasia?

The conference fee (including lunch) is £20, or £12 for full time students. A special early registration fee of £15 is available to those who book by 1st December.

For booking enquiries telephone +44 (0)28 9020 5080 or email: admin@union.ac.uk

‘Golden Rule’ Series at TCD Chapel

Details have been announced of the spring series of visiting speakers at Trinity College Dublin Chapel. Entitled “The Golden Rule”, the series will seek to explore how this universal ethical principle (“Do to others as you would have them do to you”) is understood and applied across several different faith traditions.

Among the visiting speakers will be: Dr. Marcus Braybrooke President of the World Congress of Faith; Ms. Alison Wortley, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’í Community in Ireland; and Swami Purnananda, spiritual director and founder of the Éire Vedanta Society.

Commenting on the series, the TCD Dean of Residence, the Revd Darren McCallig, said: “The Golden Rule is arguably the most universal and prevalent ethical principle in the history of humanity. Variations on the Golden Rule can be found in almost every culture, religion and philosophical system. Because of its universality it can serve as the basis for cross-cultural and inter-religious dialogue and co-operation both locally and globally. This series will seek to celebrate the great plurality of voices and traditions on the Trinity College campus while also acknowledging those universal ethical principles which can unite us.”

The full list of visiting speakers is as follows:

- 2 February: “The Golden Rule in the Bahá’í Faith”, Ms. Alison Wortley, Member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’í Community in Ireland.
- 9 February: “The Golden Rule in Islam”, Dr Yazid Said, Lecturer in Islamic Studies, Mater Dei Institute of Education, DCU.

- 16 February: “The Golden Rule in Buddhism”, Dr Jude Lal Fernando, The Irish School of Ecumenics, TCD.
- 23 February: “Philosophical Reflections on the Golden Rule”, Dr Paul O’Grady, Department of Philosophy, TCD.
- 2 March: “The Golden Rule in Hinduism”, Swami Purnananda, Éire Vedanta Society.
- 9 March: “The Golden Rule in Inter Faith Dialogue”, Dr Marcus Braybrooke, World Congress of Faiths.

All the addresses will be given in the context of the Sunday morning Choral Eucharist at 10.45am. All are welcome. Recordings of the addresses will be available on the TCD Chaplaincy website: www.tcd.ie/chaplaincy

In addition to the Sunday morning speakers, the Golden Rule series will involve visits to numerous places of worship in Dublin. These will include: The National Bahá’í Centre on Thursday 13 February; the Dublin Progressive Jewish Congregation on Wednesday 5 March and the Talbot Street Mosque on Wednesday 12 March. For times of visits and to sign-up, contact the Dean of Residence. The Church of Ireland Chaplaincy gratefully acknowledges the grant aid received from the TCD Equality Fund for this initiative.

Limerick installations point to future

Sunday 19th January saw the installation of Susan Watterson as Archdeacon of Limerick and Ardfert, Marie Rowely-Brook as Treasurer of the joint chapters of the Cathedral churches of St. Flannan Killaloe and St. Mary Limerick. The ceremony took place in St. Mary's Limerick in the context of Evensong.

As usual the music was of an exceptionally high standard, with organist Trevor Selby from St. Flannan's and Peter Barely of St. Mary's as conductor. The choir of St. Mary's Limerick may not be the largest choir in the country but it is, nevertheless, a truly fine choir and the excellence of the music can only be the product of hard work and commitment on the part of the musical team of St. Mary's.

The acts of installation took place after all due legal process and, because they are installations to the joint chapters they were shared between The Very Rev'd Gary Paulsen, Dean of Killaloe and the Very Rev'd Sandra Pragnell, Dean of Limerick.



In his sermon Bishop Trevor spoke of the new team in the diocese, with the relatively recent arrival of Dean Sandra and the installation of Dean Gary in December. The installation of the new Archdeacon and canons meant that the team was now filled, for the first time in a number of years.

The new team must now rise to the challenges of a new phase in the life of our diocese. Bishop Trevor saw this described best as the challenge which comes from the Gospel reading for the evening (John 1:43-51), "Come and See", words spoken by Philip to the sceptical Nathanael.

The new City of Culture initiative for Limerick is an opportunity. People might be sceptical but the City of Culture offers a chance for people to come and see a side city that does not hit the headlines. The Church always faces just such an opportunity to say to people "come and see" what a true living faith is all about, come and meet the Jesus who is to be found amongst us. This may seem to be an insurmountable challenge, can we rise to meet it. Together we can

We face enormous challenges, burdend by falling numbers and incomes and struggling with simply keeping the fabric of many old churches in order. The answer cannot be to close yet more buildings or amalgamate yet more parishes. Instead we must find ways in which to reach out to people and invite them to "come and see", come and meet the Jesus who enthuses us. We can only do this by working together with one another, and together with others. There are many examples in our diocese of the beginnings of working together, doing things together which we could not possibly do separately. Together we can.

The Cathedrals fill a special place in the life of the diocese and the canons continue to be a link between the Cathedrals and the parishes of the diocese, a symbol of our working together so the installation of the new Canons is an invitation to rise to the challenges which face us, to make a new beginning in our enterprise of being the people to whom others may come and see Jesus. Can we do this? Together we can.

Retirement and a move

Canon Ted Woods announced on Sunday that he would be retiring on Easter Day.

He has been rector of Rathfarnham, Dublin since 1993, diocesan director of ordinands and part time internship coordinator at CITC. He and his wife Anne are moving to Liverpool. Anne has been appointed Vicar of Formby.

Bereavement

The death has taken place of the Reverend Jimmy Hill.

He was known as a gifted guitarist with a droll sense of humour. From Carrickfergus, he served a curacy in St Marks Armagh, and was incumbent of Inver Union in Raphoe Diocese prior to his retirement. His funeral is to be on Friday in St George's, Belfast.

GB NEWS

25 year old becomes Church of Scotland's youngest ordained minister



Michael was born in Edinburgh but spent his teenage years in Glasgow, where he became a Christian at the age of 13.

Michael Mair has become the youngest ordained minister in the Church of Scotland following a service last week.

The 25-year-old graduated from New College, Edinburgh, before becoming a trainee minister at Wardie Parish Church and a probationary minister at Dalmeny linked with Edinburgh Queensferry Church.

His service of ordination took

place at St David's Church in Broomhouse, Edinburgh, with the Reverend John Cowie preaching.

During the service, the Reverend Ian Gilmour, Moderator of the Presbytery of Edinburgh ordained Mair into the presbytery, making him a new minister of the Church.

The Reverend Doctor George Whyte, Presbytery Clerk of Edinburgh, also took part in the service.

Mair's previous experience also includes time in the chaplaincy team at Edinburgh's Western General Hospital and ministry in Culloden, the Shetland Islands and the Church of Scotland's Presbytery of Europe.

The new minister said he hoped his ordination would encourage other young people consider taking up the calling to ministry.

He said: "The General Assembly last year heard about the dearth of young people becoming ministers. My ordination means I will become one of a handful of ministers under the age of thirty. I hope my ordination can inspire other young people to think about the ministry or even for elders just to get more involved in the lives of their church."

David Suchet records the whole NIV Bible

Poirot actor and living legend David Suchet has fulfilled what he describes as "a 27 year ambition" to make an audio recording of the entire NIV Bible, from Genesis right the way through to Revelation.

To be released this Easter, the 78 hour recording will be the first full-length audio Bible spoken by a single British actor.

Suchet spent over 200 hours in the recording studio while filming the final series of his hit detective TV series.

In a video to promote the new project, Suchet explains that he first became a Christian in 1986 and quickly realised that as an actor he had a particular gift he could use to share his faith. "I thought 'Well one thing I can do, or I think I can do, is to read', and I've for many, many years felt that I wanted to put my voice to the Bible, and not only bits of the Bible, but the whole thing.

"It will, for me, fulfil what I suppose is a 27 year ambition," he muses.

Suchet also reminds viewers of the Biblical command to "Hear the word of the Lord" which can be found in multiple places within Scripture, including Isaiah 28:14, Ezekiel 27:4 and Acts 13:44.

"It doesn't say 'Read the word of the Lord', it says 'Hear the word of the Lord'," Suchet notes. "It's my prayer that...it will be fresh and [those listening] will think, as I think when I'm reading, 'God, this is fantastic'."

Suchet was once part of a team of British actors who recorded parts of the Bible for Hodder Faith, who again hold the rights for his newest project.



The Guardian reports that Suchet got back in touch with director Ian Metcalfe after receiving a letter from a woman with failing eye-sight, who had been given an old tape of his recording and said it had transformed her life.

Of the new audi -recording, Metcalfe commented: "I am delighted the whole thing came together. It is amazing, just having David Suchet is transformatory.

"It is a labour of love, and so much of a benefit to everyone."

The 65-year-old actor has big dreams for the recording, the fee for which he is donating entirely to charity. "What I hope from a personal point of view, is that whoever wants to will be able to read the Bible at the same time as listen to it, or listen to it without reading it, and that they will want to keep returning to it," he says.

"But in practical terms, I have done it and I must leave it to the far higher being, and let him do what he wants with it."

The audio book will be sold in CD and digital formats. Ebooks enhanced by Suchet's recording will also be available from Hodder Faith.

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