



## Churches key responders in battle against latest Ebola outbreak



### **Ebola Treatment Facility, Guinea**

Anglican churches in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are playing a vital role, alongside healthcare agencies, in

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the fight against the world's second largest outbreak of Ebola in the north east of the country.

The Archbishop of Congo, Masimango Katanda, said the Church was attempting to raise awareness of the reality of the virus and tackling misinformation. He said: "The main role of the Church at this time is to raise awareness... Ebola concerns everyone. We will encourage all church members to be informed and follow the advice so that they can take care of themselves. We will work with pastors, youth, school heads, Mothers' Union and others – so that all can be involved together to eradicate this disease." He also said churches in the affected areas have set up different points for hand-washing and temperature checks, and are also working alongside the humanitarian agencies involved in the crisis.

The outbreak in central Africa, which has been running for almost a year, has become the second most deadly killing more than 1,600 people in the north-east of the country.

Last week, the World Health Organisation (WHO) called the outbreak a "public health emergency of international concern," after the first confirmed case in Goma, a DRC city of nearly two million people on the country's eastern border with Rwanda. This case has increased the risk of the virus spreading internationally.

The crisis in the DRC has been made more difficult due to an ongoing conflict in the region.

Archbishop Katanda said the outbreak was in an area where many different armed groups of rebels from various countries were active which had made the response more

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complex, as local people saw aid organisations helping Ebola victims, but not the victims of the ongoing conflict.

He has called for a multi-targeted approach to help the region: tackling the Ebola virus and assisting the victims of the violence in the area. He also emphasised the importance of education in schools and churches.

Rachel Carnegie, executive director of the Anglican Alliance, which helps to co-ordinate the activities of Anglican relief and development agencies, said they had been working with colleagues in the DRC to provide support, including sharing what had been learned from the outbreak five years ago in West Africa.

She said: “It’s a very serious situation which we are all concerned about. But the bishops there have shown exemplary leadership, also the responses we had from churches in West Africa, after the outbreak there, have helped inform Anglican churches in the DRC. One of the key lessons learned from the faith response in West Africa was to work with health services to promote prevention strategies including safe and dignified burials.”

Rachel said Anglicans had been working together with ecumenical colleagues to develop new theological and scientific resources for churches to provide factual information and practical advice about what they can do. She said: “We’re working with the bishops to plan how the clergy can test them out and hope that these resources will be rolled out in the near future for use by clergy and other leaders.”

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A 2015 report by four faith-based agencies on the role of faith leaders in the Ebola response in West Africa called *Keeping the Faith*, showed the impact that church engagement had in helping tackle the virus.

Dr Janice Proud, Anglican Alliance Relief and Programme Manager said the report documented the trajectory of the virus, which showed a sharp decline in its spread coincided with the point in time when faith leaders became centrally engaged in the response.

She said: “Once faith leaders were involved, the report found that they were transformational due to their trusted, respected long-term presence in communities and their ability to contextualise the response to take into account local beliefs and traditions.”

Rachel Carnegie said the Anglican Alliance is hoping that this vital role will be supported as part of the wider response to the outbreak in the DRC.

## **Kirk minister walks 155 miles on Skye for new partner church in the Middle East**

A Kirk minister criss-crossed the Isle of Skye for 155 miles on foot to raise money to visit his congregation’s new partner church in the Middle East.

Rev Rory MacLeod, who leads Strath and Sleat Parish Church, trekked for five days as part of a mission to help Christian refugees forced to flee Iraq amid rising religious conflict.



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He braved the wind and the rain and slept in a tent for most of the time to fulfil a dream and raise £1,240 to enable him and his friend Archie MacCalman to visit St Paul's Church in Amman, Jordan.

The Arabic-speaking congregation runs support programmes in Amman and in the desert region of Wadi Rum to help Iraqi Christians cope with the traumatic experiences they have suffered.

Mr MacLeod said the twinning relationship with [St Paul's, which belongs to the Episcopal diocese of Jerusalem](#), was formed because his congregation in the south-west of Skye was "anxious" to help people affected by catastrophic unrest in the Middle East.

## **Aramaic**

According to United Nations estimates, more than 750,000 people in Jordan, which has a population of 10 million, are refugees.

Mr MacLeod said the world is witnessing the "exodus" of Christians in Iraq where they have existed since 1AD, thanks to the missionary endeavours of Thomas and Thaddeus who were two of Jesus' original apostles.

The population, many of whom speak Aramaic, the language of Jesus himself, has plummeted from 1.5 million people to around 250,000 and most of them are expected to leave Iraq in the coming years via Jordan.

This is due to a civil war raging on the Nineveh Plain between Kurds and government forces who have disregard for Christians.

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## **Mr MacLeod and Mr MacCalman, youth leader at Strath and Sleat Church, visited Jordan in June**

Although Iraqi Christians are refugees, the Jordanian government officially considers them guests and therefore they do not qualify for emergency relief and are not allowed to work.

Exiled and without status, they lodge where they can in the growing urban sprawl of Amman.

### **Shattered**

Mr MacLeod, who trekked across Skye in May, said: “The twinning came about because the Kirk Session felt there was a desire within the congregation to respond to the refugee crisis and the advice we received was to get involved at the sharp end.

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“It is about giving expression to the compassion we feel towards our suffering sisters and brothers in the Middle East, while not neglecting our nearer neighbours.”

Mr MacLeod said none of the refugees he met in Jordan wanted anything other than repatriation to a third country.

“The hopelessness of their predicament in Jordan and the trauma they had experienced in Iraq has sealed their resolve,” he added.

“One family we visited at home spoke for so many we had already encountered.

“They fled to Mosul from their home village on the Nineveh Plain on the arrival of Daesh (Islamic State).

“At first, their Muslim neighbours welcomed them home but, as Daesh’s grip fastened, that community solidarity which had bound Christians and Muslims for centuries shattered.

“Faced with the choice between forced conversion or losing everything, most Christians chose to flee – initially to the relative safety of Kurdish northern Iraq and then, when that proved no safer, to Jordan.”

## **Medieval manuscripts online**

The Church of Ireland has custody of a small but important number of medieval ecclesiastical codices, the care of which is the responsibility of the Representative Church Body Library. These are volumes of largely administrative records which are important sources for discovering how cathedrals and dioceses functioned before the Reformation.

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Two of the volumes are on display in Christ Church cathedral, Dublin. The 14th century Liber Niger is part of the cathedral's Magna Carta exhibition and the 16th century Liber Albus is in the cathedral's Treasury exhibition in the crypt which, as well as manuscripts, includes church pate and furnishings.

The other codices, the Dignitas Decani of St Patrick's cathedral, Dublin, the Credi Mihi and Archbishop Alen's register from the diocese of Dublin, and the Red Book of Ossory are in the care of the RCB Library where they are available for scholarly research. However in order to make these sources more widely available, and to preserve them by reducing handling, the RCB Library has begun a programme to digitise these codices and make them available online.

The Library has already released a digital version of the Red Book of Ossory, a 14th century codex associated with the Anglo–Norman Bishop of Ossory, Richard Ledred. This volume is the subject of an ongoing study by the medievalist, the Revd Dr Adrian Empey.

The second release is a digital version of the Liber Niger Alani which was compiled for John Alen who was Archbishop of Dublin, 1530–34 and this is now available for consultation. This manuscript had previously been available only through a calendar by Charles McNeill which was published by the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland in 1950. Now not only the full text but a complete image of the volume is freely available to all.

These manuscripts are available on the RCB Library page of the Church of Ireland website – [www.ireland.anglican.org](http://www.ireland.anglican.org)



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## July 29 - Today in Christian history

**July 29, 1030:** Viking king Olaf Haraldsson, patron saint of Norway, dies in the battle of Stiklestad. Though limited in his ability to force his countrymen to convert during his reign, his death was later hailed as a miracle-filled martyrdom and, as his legend grew, it spurred on Christians converting the country. In time, Olaf became one of the most well-known saints of medieval Christendom, and his relics in Norway became one of Europe's most popular pilgrimage destinations.

**July 29, 1775:** The U.S. Army founds its chaplaincy, making it the Army's oldest division after the infantry.

**July 29, 1794:** In a converted blacksmith's shop in Philadelphia, former slave Richard Allen assembles a group of black Christians who had faced discrimination in the local Methodist Episcopal Church. They formed the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, the mother church of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, now known throughout the world.

**July 29, 1833:** English abolitionist William Wilberforce dies a mere three days after England abolishes slavery.

**July 29, 1968:** Pope Paul VI publishes his encyclical "Humanae Vitae," which condemns artificial birth control methods.

## July 29 - News briefs

**+++ Connor Streetreach** - this year partnered with Mossley Parish, and a large team of young people from the [churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)

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diocese, supported for the third consecutive year by a group of Americans from Christ in Youth, had a huge impact in the area. A full report on the visit by the American group and on Streetreach 2019, which ran from July 2-5, will appear in the next issue of the diocesan magazine *Connor Connections*. It was an amazing few days, during which the young people ran a kids' club, organised outreach to families, carried out practical work and ran a community event.

**+++ Children's Ministry resources** - The Church of Ireland Children's Ministry has produced a series of videos for use all year round but which may be of interest for summer outreach projects. The videos are full of ideas for helping children and their families enjoy being part of the church family and are free to share. The titles are 'Bible Story Telling Ideas'. 'Creative Prayer'. 'All Age Worship' and 'Make Yourself at Home'. They are available through the [news](#) section of the Church of Ireland website.

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**+++ Summer Music in Sandford** - continues next Friday at 1.10pm in Sandford parish church, Ranelagh, where there will be a recital by the soprano, Sonia Stronach.

**+++Visiting choirs** - Yesterday in Christ Church cathedral, Dublin, the choir of the Cathedral Church of the Redeemer, Calgary, sang at the 11am Sung Eucharist and at the 3.30pm Choral Evensong while in St Patrick's cathedral, Dublin, the 11.15 am Choral Eucharist and the 3.15pm Evensong was sung by the Choir of St Paul's cathedral, Buffalo.

The Choir of the United Methodist Church of Vista, California, sang at a Service of the Word in All Saints' Church, Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, and today, Monday they will give a joint concert with Credo Ensemble in St James church, Athboy, Co. Meath, at 8pm.

**+++ Food for thought -**

“We have rights drawn from soil and sky;  
The use, the pace, the patient years of labour,  
The rain against the lips, the changing light, have altered us.  
We would be strangers in the Capitol; This is our country  
also, nowhere else;  
And we shall not be outcast on the world”  
John Hewitt

## July 29 News Links

[Churches divided on whether BBC should be taking part in Pride](#)

Belfast Telegraph

Churches and Church-based figures gave a mixed and cautious response ...  
Spokespersons for the Presbyterian Church and the **Church of Ireland** ...

[As the threat of No Deal looms, the rhetoric is becoming raw](#)

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Sluggier O'Toole

The shock of reality comes from the unlikely quarter of the **Church of Ireland**. When it's pointed out, English people often find it curious that the ...

### [Champion of Irish culture in London bows out after 13 years of service](#)

Irish Times

The centre closed in 2013, with activities moving for the duration to the nearby community centre in a **Church** of England-owned **church**. The new ...

### [Ulster surnames making their mark from the Apollo to the White House](#)

IrishCentral

They were all unionists, proud Protestants, mainly of the **Church of Ireland** species, ... in a generation, would be able to win a vote for a united Ireland.

### [Medieval Irish Pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela review](#)

Irish Times

... French side of the Pyrenees, I found myself in the company of – weirdly – the Rev Martin O'Kelly, a **Church of Ireland** curate from Christ Church Bray.

### [Ancient Scottish Church Bell Stolen from Sacred Island Leaving Locals Devastated](#)

Ancient Origins

St Finan was born in **Ireland** and is thought to have lived between between 520 ... An **MSN news** report, and most others you will read, open with the ...

### [Nobody is stranded in Sandymount](#)

The Times

St Matthew's national school, which is **Church of Ireland**, is co-ed. Enable Ireland caters for those with disabilities from birth to 18. Shellybanks Educate ...

### [Faith leaders urge Boris Johnson to offer more refugees sanctuary](#)

The Guardian

The signatories to the open letter include more than 20 **Church of England** bishops, the secretary general of the Muslim Council of Britain, 33 rabbis, ...

### [Church leaders unite in refugees call to PM](#)

Premier

The signatories include 28 **Church of England** bishops, members of the ... In a world of fake **news** there's never been a greater need for quality ...

### [Raped vicar reveals tragic tale of sex abuse in the church](#)

ExaminerLive

Staincliffe's Matthew Ineson has hit the headlines in recent weeks after he lashed out at **Church of England** (CofE) leaders during an independent ...



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[Final picture of tragic teen who died from cheese allergy – as mum reveals heartbreak](#)

Daily Star

It comes after grieving Rina criticised the school, William Perkin **Church of England** High School in Greenford, north-west London, for “taking too long” ...

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