



Archbishop Thabo Makgoba and Mrs Lungi Makgoba in Wittenberg at the Kirchentag

The Reformation was a defining moment 500 years ago but can also serve as an inspiration for the next five centuries, South African Anglican Archbishop Thabo Makgoba has told tens of thousands of people at the German Protestant Kirchentag (church festival).

“It is impossible to overstate the contribution of Martin Luther to that part of the world influenced by Europe and its thought,” said Makgoba, in a sermon at a 28 May service at Wittenberg, the town celebrated worldwide as the place where Luther’s Reformation

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began, when in 1517 he denounced church abuses in his 95 Theses.

Luther’s questioning of authority “mobilized millions, in an unstoppable movement, to embrace the right to participate,” said Archbishop Makgoba at the open-air service that concluded the 24-28 May Kirchentag and inaugurated a “Reformation summer” of activities in Wittenberg.

Organized every two years, the Kirchentag this year coincided with the Reformation anniversary and

Reformation is ‘GPS’ for next 500 years says African Anglican leader in Luther’s town

brought more than 100,000 people to Berlin, many making the 90-kilometre journey to the Reformation service on the banks of the river Elbe, just outside Wittenberg.

Interpreted in today's context, the Reformation "can become our guide, our inspirational GPS, our global positioning system for the next 500 years," continued Makgoba, who became archbishop of Cape Town in 2007.

Behind the stage where Makgoba was preaching could be seen the tower of Wittenberg's Castle Church, where Luther is said to have nailed his 95 Theses on 31 October 1517, setting in train the events that would lead to the emergence of Protestant churches.

People had started to gather on the banks of the river Elbe the previous evening, where they joined in prayer with the ecumenical Taizé community in a "night of lights" of candles lit as the sun went down.

Makgoba challenged young people in particular "to hear the cries of others and of the planet as God would," and to take action, "for love's sake, dignity's sake, for freedom's sake, for Christ's sake."

He described how Germany in the Nazi era and South Africa under apartheid had "histories of unspeakable cruelty but they are also histories of God's unfailing faithfulness."

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Worshippers included German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, a Protestant who is a past member of the Kirchentag's presidium. Addressing participants, he recalled how the Reformation had reinforced faith but the divisions between Christian traditions it entailed had also led to suffering and misery, hatred and violence.

However, he continued, "the fellowship we now experience between Christian traditions would have been difficult to imagine even half a century ago."

After 500 years of division between Protestants and Roman Catholics, Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, who heads the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD),

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said in a closing message, “we now want to share with each other the whole richness of our traditions.” Founded in 1949 by Protestant lay people in Germany to strengthen democratic culture after the Nazi dictatorship and the Second World War, the Kirchentag has gained European and global reach in recent decades.

Many of the 2,000 events during the Kirchentag involved representatives of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and its member churches from several continents.

“In this year marking the 500th anniversary of the events of the Reformation, the Kirchentag is one of the milestones of our pilgrimage of justice and peace that motivates us to discover in these past events resources that help transform the world,” commented WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit. “This discovery is both the true meaning of grace and the true meaning of faith.”

Anglicans and Roman Catholics agree international statement on ecclesiology

Anglicans and Roman Catholics should see in each other “a community in which the Holy Spirit is alive and active,” the latest communiqué from the official

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ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church says.



Members of the third-phase of the Anglican – Roman Catholic International Commission (Arcic) met in the central German city of Erfurt early this month for their seventh meeting. They chose to meet in the city to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation – it is here that Martin Luther was ordained and lived as a monk.

During their meeting, the members of Arcic agreed the text of a new statement looking at Anglican and Roman Catholic ecclesiology. *Walking Together on the*

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Way: Learning to be Church – Local, Regional, Universal, to be known as *The Erfurt Document*, will be published next year.

This first formal statement to be agreed in the third phase of the Arcic discussions addresses the structures and decision making processes of the two churches; and explores church order and the maintenance of communion. It paves the way for the work on Arcic's next statement, which explores how the church discerns "right ethical teaching" at both a local and universal level. The statement agreed this week asks the Churches to consider where they are in need of reform; and then to ask what they can learn from their ecumenical partner. Arcic anticipate that the Erfurt document, *Walking Together on the Way: Learning to be Church – Local, Regional, Universal*, will be published in 2018.

- [Click here](#) to read the latest Arcic Communiqué (pdf).

Ecumenical walk celebrates anniversaries of Dublin Anglican and Catholic parishes

Parishioners of Killiskey and Ashford united on Sunday afternoon last for an ecumenical walk to retrace their roots.

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The Revd Ken Rue, Vicar of Wicklow and Killiskey Parish, Canon Kieran O'Mahony OSA, local historian Sheila Clarke and Fr Eamon Crossan ADM Ashford and Glenealy Parish.

Both parishes are currently celebrating milestone anniversaries with the bicentenary of the Church of Ireland Nun's Cross Church, Killiskey, and the centenary of the Catholic Church of the Most Holy Rosary, Ashford.

The walk was organised by the Revd Ken Rue of Nun's Cross and Fr Eamon Crosson of Ashford and the participants all enjoyed the good weather and fellowship.

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The walk began at the old Killiskey church and graveyard which was the original church of Killiskey Parish. Killiskey Church was established by the Augustinian Order so the walkers were joined by Canon Kieran O'Mahony, an Augustinian Friar. Those who built the church were likely to have had links to St Kevin and it was on the pilgrim route to Glendalough.

Ashford man, Tony Dunne, was responsible for getting a group together to wrestle the ruined church and its graveyard back from the undergrowth. Their work began in 2004 and continues today. Tony gave a history of the church from its establishment in early Christian times to its decline which began in the 12th century. However, people from across the community, both Anglican and Catholic, continued to bury their dead in the graveyard and Tony's great grandmother was the last person to be interred there in 1970.

Following prayers led by Canon O'Mahony, the large group walked the three kilometre journey to Nun's Cross Church. There the Revd Ken Rue outlined the history of Nun's Cross Church. He also gave details of their bicentenary celebrations which include a flower festival in the church from September 1 to 3 and a Bicentenary Service which will be celebrated by the Archbishop of Dublin on October 28, the exact anniversary of the consecration of the church.

The walkers then made their way to the Church of the Most Holy Rosary in Ashford where they were greeted by Fr Eamon Crosson. Maurice Corr outlined details of their parish celebrations which include a special Mass on June 30 concelebrated by the Archbishop of Dublin with Fr Eamon and former priests of the parish, a pilgrim walk on July 29 and a parish mission in October. Local historian Dick Fitzpatrick gave a brief outline of the history of the church.

As this year is also the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, Canon Kieran gave a talk in the parish centre on Reformation and the links between Martin Luther and the Augustinian order.

Archbishop of Armagh calls for prayer for Coptic Christians in Egypt

Today The Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, called for Christians in Ireland to hold Coptic Christian people in their prayers in the wake of further massacres in Egypt reported recently.

The Archbishop said, 'While we are rightly appalled by callous attacks on citizens close to home at this time, I am acutely conscious that we must also condemn the atrocious killing and wounding of dozens of Coptic Christians in Egypt while travelling towards a

monastery in recent days. We remember those who bear the name of Christ there in our hearts and prayers. We should think of them as Christian martyrs.

‘It is tragic that Coptic Christians in Egypt have increasingly become targets, with four brutal massacres since last December, including attacks on churches on Palm Sunday – which both the Archbishop of Dublin and I commented on at that time. In speaking out against these horrors, we also pray for those families who have been bereaved and for those who have been injured – for their recovery and wellbeing, and for those who are attending to their medical needs and welfare – praying in the name of the Prince of Peace, Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.’

Willowfield’s open house for new opportunities

With Willowfield’s new church halls now up and running, members of the local community are being invited to avail of what Open House has to offer each Tuesday (10am–1pm).

The emphasis is on relaxed informality in a user-friendly environment providing a variety of activities for those who want something to do. But if all you want and need most is some support or maybe just a chat over a cup of tea or coffee, Open House is for you, too.

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Essentially, Open House is for anybody who needs a boost, a point underlined in its ‘drop in and chill out’ catchphrase.

You will be welcomed by people who want to help, for Open House provides support and information on a number of difficult social issues.

Its services include a Food Store, a Job Club and debt advice from CAP (Christians Against Poverty). For any who are interested, there will be also be opportunities to participate in some short courses on money management, healthy cooking/eating and a number of other related topics. And with health in mind, Open House also offers use of Willowfield’s new gym facilities.

Feel free to drop in any Tuesday. And should you want more information on what Open House does, contact James Myles on 078 8087 4965.

Derry priest criticises First Communion reduced by parents to orgies of materialism with miniature brides

An Irish priest has criticised parents who reduce their child’s First Communion to an “orgy of materialism with miniature brides”, claiming many children never return to Mass the following Sunday.

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Fr Paddy O’Kane, parish priest for Ballymagroarty in the diocese of Derry, said some families prepared their child for First Communion simply “because everyone else is doing it”.

“Perhaps [it] is a harmless tradition keeping them in a club which for all its flaws, they’d rather remain part of,” he said. “Or they don’t want their child singled out as different. Or they just want to throw a party.

An orgy of sentimentality

“Then it’s reduced to an orgy of sentimentality and materialism with miniature brides and bouncy castles and bursting bank accounts.”

Writing on his [parish website](#), Fr O’Kane reminded parents that when their child was baptised, they “promised to bring him/her up in the practice of the faith”.

“That promise will only be kept if this is not a ‘once off’ occasion but the beginning of a new stage in his/her faith journey. Simply put, you must bring him/her to back to Mass again every weekend after his/her First Communion.”

He also said he expected a “reverential silent” during Mass. “It is not acceptable to engage in conversation at any time but most of all at Holy Communion,” he wrote



Girls attend a mass in which about 550 children had their first communion at the metropolitan cathedral in Managua

“Children are like blotting paper – they soak up all they see and hear!” he concluded.

In 2015, Fr O’Kane called for an end to the school “production line” of preparing children for First Communion only to see them never return.

He said that of 121 children who had recently made their First Communion at his parish, just 20 returned the following Sunday.

He called the figures “profoundly disappointing”.

Visit to highlight Bird of Paradise Ministries in Rwanda

The Rev Jerome and Mrs Mary Munyangaju, now living in Rwanda, are returning to Ireland for a short visit in June.

On June 19, in Knockbreda Parish Hall, they will address the annual meeting of the charity they founded, Bird of Paradise Ministries in Rwanda. They will also be visiting supporting churches.

It is two years since they left their home in Killyleagh to administer the home for the elderly in Kigali.

Currently they care for three residents, Esperance (66), Khadijaa (93) and Stephanie (97). Each of these ladies was greatly affected by the genocide in 1994 and has no home or family to care for them.

Jerome and Mary explain: “All our residents in one sense are grieving for their losses and are only comforted by the care they receive from us.

“This gives them hope.

“They now know we are their parents, they believe they have a bright future. Now they know that God loves them in a practical way and that He answers their

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prayers, so our our time of evening devotions together is greatly valued by us all.”

Jerome and Mary are really looking forward to re-connecting with family and friends.

More information about the charity and the couple’s schedule can be obtained from: Revd Bobbie Moore (Director), bobbiamoore1@gmail.com or Mavis Spiers (Secretary), hspenn@btinternet.com



New Director of Research for Church Army

Church Army has appointed a new Director of Research, currently the Church of England’s Head of Ministry Development, Dr Tim Ling.

This follows the announcement that George Lings, who has led Church Army’s Research Unit for 20 years, will be retiring in September.

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Dr Tim Ling new Director of Research for Church Army

Tim said: “I’m very much looking forward to working with the Church Army team, and thinking about how we may build on George’s compelling legacy. We cannot pause in our paying attention to how God is active in mission, particularly through the voices from ‘the edge’, which is one of the gifts that the Church Army brings to the wider Church.”

In his current role, Tim oversees research work and has been responsible for the development, implementation and review of national policy relating to continuing ministerial development. Tim will be commencing his new role for Church Army in October.

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The Church of England’s Director of Ministry, Julian Hubbard, said: “Tim has made a major contribution to the work of ministry development. My colleagues and I look forward to continuing to work together with him on the many areas of common interest and purpose which we share with Church Army.”

Church Army Chief Executive, Mark Russell, said: “We are thrilled that Tim is joining our team. For 20 years, our Research Unit has been at the cutting edge of pioneering and evangelism, inspiring others to help the church be more creative in mission. Tim will bring his considerable gifts and skills to this crucial role.”

Tim is an Honorary Research Associate at University College London’s Institute of Education and his previous experience includes work as a police officer, company director, university lecturer and as a diocesan ministry development officer. He lives in Canterbury with his wife and two children.

Today in Christian History, May 31

May 31, 1578: Italian archaeologist Antonio Bosio discovers the Christian catacombs in Rome. Some have mistaken them for places of refuge or worship, but Christians used them mainly as burial chambers.

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May 31, 1638: Puritan pastor Thomas Hooker arrives in what is now Connecticut, after leaving Massachusetts because of a rivalry with Roger Williams. The minister also helped organize America's first federal government, the United Colonies of New England (see issue 41: The American Puritans).

May 31, 1701: Alexander Cruden, whose biblical concordance is still the standard for the King James Version, is born in Aberdeen, Scotland. Prone to erratic behavior, he worked on the concordance between mental breakdowns.

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