



EU dialogue with religions only secure with Lisbon Treaty, says Euro Parliament President

Following a meeting of some 20 European religious leaders - Christian, Jewish and Muslim - earlier this month at the European Commission in Brussels, European Parliament President Hans-Gert Pöttering told a press conference that such discussions could not be guaranteed in the future without the full ratification of the Lisbon Treaty.

Mr Pöttering said that the annual dialogue between representatives of religions and the EU institutions was carried out on the "basis of good will" rather than because of a legal obligation, adding: "If the Lisbon Treaty is not ratified, with the new leaderships in the commission and the parliament, they could abolish this dialogue because legally it's not binding."

The EU Parliament President - whose comments were reported by the Brussels-based independent source of European news and information, *EUObserver*, and subsequently confirmed to the *Gazette* by a spokesman for Mr Pöttering - also said it was the "responsibility of Ireland" to ensure the treaty came into effect.

Commenting on Mr Pöttering's remarks, Avril Doyle, Fine Gael MEP for



European Parliament President Hans-Gert Pöttering

the Republic of Ireland's East constituency, who favours the Lisbon Treaty, told the *Gazette* there would always be "contact, consultations and debate between political and religious leaders", adding: "This healthy debate will continue at national and European level regardless of the fate of any particular European Treaty or the pronouncements of any individual political leader."

Jim Nicholson, Ulster Unionist MEP for Northern Ireland, who opposes the Lisbon Treaty, told the *Gazette*: "My long-standing opposition to the European Constitution/Lisbon Treaty is well known. I know Hans-Gert Pöttering well - and I know he is personally very strongly committed to EU dialogue with religious communities. However, we disagree on the issue of Lisbon: he strongly supports it, I

strongly oppose it."

Nonetheless, Mr Nicholson continued: "Any suggestion from whatever quarter that this dialogue with religious communities might not continue without Lisbon ratification is unhelpful. The EU relationship with religious communities must continue, whether or not Lisbon is ratified."

Mary Lou McDonald, Sinn Féin MEP for Dublin, who also opposes the Lisbon Treaty, told the *Gazette* that Mr Pöttering's comments were "further evidence of the EU political establishment's refusal to accept the democratic decision of the Irish people".

Ms McDonald said it was "totally unacceptable that Mr Pöttering would use coercive language aimed at forcing Ireland to accept the Lisbon Treaty", adding: "It is widely acknowledged that the annual interreligious dialogue between religious leaders and civic institutions is valuable. It must continue irrespective of the fate of the Lisbon Treaty."

Mr Pöttering's spokesman told the *Gazette* that the Parliament President had simply been stating the facts regarding the Lisbon Treaty's securing of the EU-religious leaders dialogue. (Further report on EU-religious leaders meeting, page 7)

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Editorial

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

First results of a World Council of Churches' study are showing that, in spite of a global trend to better recognize the right to conscientious objection, in many countries those who in fact exercise that right are often discriminated against, persecuted, repeatedly punished or sent to prison.

The WCC has reported that in Israel the army not only recruits young men, but also women at the age of 17, and has pointed out that it takes much courage to refuse, and that those who do refuse often face a first prison term when they are still teenagers. A WCC press release indicated: "In recent years the 'refusenik' movement of conscientious objectors has been growing. Many of those who refuse are not against the army in general, but against the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. They also condemn the recent war in Gaza."

The Geneva-based global ecumenical organisation reports that Israeli conscientious objectors are supported by various Church organisations and that in Canada, Churches provide a sanctuary for war resisters from the United States. The WCC says that most of these are soldiers who joined the army as volunteers, but now refuse to serve the armed forces as a consequence of their experiences in Iraq, which have made them feel that that war was morally wrong.

Friday of last week was an International Day of Conscientious Objection to military service. Such days highlight issues of importance to the global community and stimulate both reflection and action. The right of the exercise of conscience is fundamental and people who for genuinely conscientious reasons do not wish to engage in military action when so required by their countries should be afforded other avenues of service to their countries.

However, as a 2006 United Nations' report on the subject stated, no form of alternative service must be punitive in character. Furthermore, as the same UN report rightly indicated: "States, subject to the circumstances of the individual case meeting the other requirements of the definition of a refugee as set out in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, should be encouraged to consider granting asylum to conscientious objectors compelled to leave their country of origin because they fear persecution owing to their refusal to perform military service when there is no provision, or no adequate provision, for conscientious objection to military service."

Last week's International Day raised these and other related issues; work to improve the situation globally must continue both through yet more awareness-raising initiatives and diplomatic engagement.

Liturgical Notes

Revised Common Lectionary

24th MAY

THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER;
SUNDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION DAY

Liturgical Colour: White

The first reading is Acts 1: 15-17, 21-26. Prayerful reorganization and expectation are undertaken by the disciples. Where required, the alternative is Exodus 28: 1-4, 9-10, 29-30 - Moses prepares priestly leadership for God's people in Israel.

Psalm 1 speaks of the happiness of those with strong faith.

In the second reading, the last in the series, from 1 John 5: 9-13, the writer teaches that trust in Christ brings eternal life.

The Gospel reading, John 17: 6-19, is the middle part of Jesus' prayer in the Upper Room for his disciples.

THE ANGLICAN CYCLE OF PRAYER

This is Anglican Communion Sunday. Prayer is asked that the whole Communion may fulfil its mission and that unity may be preserved. Pray for the General Secretary, Kenneth Kearon, and for his responsibilities.

31st MAY

THE DAY OF PENTECOST; WHITSUNDAY

Liturgical colour: Red on Sunday, White on Monday (Visitation of the BVM transferred), but Green for the other weekdays.
Ordinary time readings resume on Tuesday.

The reading from Acts 2: 1-21 (the account of the events in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit was first poured out on the infant Church) is mandatory either as the first or second reading. The alternative first reading, Ezekiel 37: 1-14, is the prophet's vision of dry bones being brought to life by the breath (wind) - the same word in Hebrew as that for spirit.

Psalm 104: 26-36, 37a celebrates the manifold and wonderful works of the Lord - note the versification.

The second reading is Romans 8: 22-27, where the apostle speaks of the inner working of the Holy Spirit in Christian living.

The Gospel reading, John 15: 26-27; 16: 4b-15, is part of the teaching Jesus gave about the Advocate (in older versions, the Comforter).

ANGLICAN CYCLE OF PRAYER

Pray for the Diocese of Ogbomoso (Nigeria).
The bishop is Matthew Osunade.

J. A. B. M.

Christ Church Cathedral hosts 'unique and unmissable' exhibition of Russian icons

By Garrett Casey

The work of the celebrated Russian-born, Sweden-resident artist, Ludmila Pawlowska, will be highlighted at a major exhibition in Christ Church Cathedral Dublin from Thursday 11th June to Sunday 19th July.

This will be the exhibition's only Irish stop on an international tour which takes in cathedrals and churches throughout Europe, including venues in Scandinavia, the United Kingdom and Switzerland.

During the exhibition, the Cathedral will be transformed, with 12 monumental works entitled 'Your face I am looking for' hanging between the pillars in the nave. Visitors to the Cathedral will also be able to view approximately 100 contemporary works of art by Ms Pawlowska, which were inspired by icons, and around 25 traditional Russian icons from the workshops of the Vassilevsky Monastery in Suzdal and of the Danilov Monastery in Moscow.

According to the artist, "Christ Church Cathedral is a beautiful and perfect space for such an exhibition."



Ludmila Pawlowska (2nd right) is pictured at the launch of *Icons in Transformation* with (from left) Aonghus Dwane, Christ Church Cathedral Cultural Committee; Des Campbell, Christ Church Cathedral; and the Very Revd Dermot Dunne.

She was drawn to icons following the death of her mother. She recalled: "I have been able to work through sorrow with the help of my painting. This short step between life and death sharpened my awareness of the existential issues of life and my subjects took on an ethereal aspect and have been inspired by the Russian icon tradition."

Some of the work of Ludmila Pawlowska can be viewed at: <http://www.samlaren.org/ludmilapawlowska/>

The exhibition has received very positive reviews on its tour to date. At its most recent exhibition in Hereford, the *Hereford Times* described it as "unique and unmissable ... dramatic and intriguing."

The Dean of Christ Church Cathedral, the Very Revd Dermot Dunne, commented: "We're very excited that the *Icons in Transformation* exhibition will be visiting Dublin this summer. Icons are, of course, most strongly associated with Eastern Orthodox

Christianity, including its Greek, Russian and Romanian traditions.

"In bringing the exhibition to Christ Church, we are not only displaying these magnificent works of art and devotion to the people of Dublin, but we are also bridging a millennium-long gap between Eastern and Western Christianity."

The exhibition will be officially opened by the playwright, novelist and poet, Sebastian Barry, on Wednesday 10th June, at 7.00pm. As part of the month-long exhibition, on Saturday 27th June, beginning at 11.00am, there will be a series of lectures on 'Icons in Liturgy and Culture'. Speakers will include Fr Gregory Collins; Tim Thurston, of Lyric FM; and Dr Sarah Smyth, of the Department of Russian and Slavonic Studies in Trinity College Dublin.

The exhibition is being assisted by NORDEN - the Nordic Arts Council.

(Entrance to the exhibition will be included in the admission price to the Cathedral [Adult €6; seniors €4; students €3]. Entrance to the Cathedral for prayer, whether during services or otherwise, is free.)

MU members complete walk for Relief Fund



Some 15 Mothers' Union (MU) members from branches in Connor Diocese completed the nine-mile walk as part of the Belfast City Marathon on the first Bank Holiday Monday in May in aid of the MU Relief Fund. Pictured (left) are some of the walkers, with Moira Thom, Connor MU Diocesan President (front row, standing, centre) and Kathleen Rodgers, one of the Connor MU Diocesan Vice Presidents (back row, 4th right).

New parish history 'opens doors' on community identity

The history of the parish of Kilmore, Diocese of Armagh, was recently launched by the Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Revd Alan Harper.

The book - *A Journey Through Time*, written by Patricia Reilly - claims that Kilmore is possibly the oldest site of Christian worship in the whole of Ireland.

In his address to a cross-community audience of around 300 people, the Archbishop described the book as both elegantly written and a delight to read. He commended the author for her scholarly text, whilst wearing her scholarship lightly.

Archbishop Harper described the history as one which "opens doors rather than creating barriers for the reader." He continued: "In contemporary Ireland, it is important to have a confident sense of one's own identity and roots. It is also important that a community that embraces such diversity should respectfully affirm identities different to its own."

"Any work which chronicles the forces and processes that have shaped community or



Patricia Reilly - parish history author

identity is an important contribution to deeper and more respectful mutual understanding. There is no private history: history is shaped."

The book touches upon the visit of St Patrick to Kilmore and also dwells on the history of the early Culdee Church. Making use of both the Annals and early diocesan records, the author points out that Kilmore (Co. Armagh) has been a place of Christian worship from the fifth century up to the present time.

(The book, priced £15+pp, can be obtained by calling 028 3752 4365 and is also available in Trimprint, Armagh.)



Canon Ken Higgins (4th right) is pictured following his recent institution as rector of St Donard's, Bloomfield, Belfast, Diocese of Down, with his wife, Ann (4th left). Also included are (from left) Rhonda Moroney (people's churchwarden), Heather Boyd (rector's churchwarden), the Revd John Auchmuty (area dean), Bishop Harold Miller, Lily Gribben (outgoing people's churchwarden) and Sylvia Morrow (outgoing rector's churchwarden).

Co. Antrim parish serves up exotic food in fundraising evening



Pictured preparing some of the food at Agherton parish's 'Big Curry' party are (from left) Liz Hanlon, Judith Hegan and Grace Bowers.

By Michelle Gibb

Exotic and tempting smells recently wafted across the car park of Agherton (Portstewart) parish centre, Diocese of Connor.

Inside, volunteers from the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG) Ireland, along with some ladies from the parish, were busy peeling, chopping, frying and boiling in preparation for Agherton's second 'Big Curry' party, following the success of last year's party.

This year, over 85 people were present to enjoy the occasion.

Serving the food was a slow process, as guests studied the dishes and were reassured that they were full of flavour, not of heat. Royal shahi lamb, chicken curry, Bombay potatoes, dahl and vegetable korma were accompanied

by basmati rice, carrots with onion seed, banana raita, mango chutney and naan bread.

Some of the ladies donned saris and salwars and, not to be left out, the clergy of the parish looked stunning in their kurta pyjamas.

Jan de Bruijn, USPG Ireland's Director and volunteer 'master chef', commented: "It was great to work in this magnificent new parish kitchen. It was fantastic for the work done by the ladies of the parish; fabulous for everyone's support; fun which was had by all who came; and funds for the work of USPG, which was most gratifying and for which we were most grateful."

Support for the event came from within and beyond the parish and many who came last year returned again for the great food, lively atmosphere and fellowship.

Tell us about it!

If you have any news which you think would be of interest to the Church of Ireland at large, please send it to the *Gazette*, typewritten or by email. Colour pictures only, prints or by email (high resolution). Publication cannot be guaranteed. Contact details, see page 2. Thank you!

QUB Student Centre - a 'hive of activity'

By Catherine Little

The Church of Ireland Student Centre at Queen's University Belfast has been a 'home from home' for students and other visitors to Belfast for more than 50 years.

By offering accommodation for around 40 students in a variety of single and twin rooms throughout the academic year, the Student Centre - situated on Elmwood Avenue - is a hive of activity, creating a sense of Christian community for both the residents and other students within Queen's.

The Centre offers a programme of events throughout the week which includes a service on Sunday evenings, whereby students are encour-



Pictured outside the Church of Ireland Chaplaincy at Queen's University Belfast are (back row, from left) the Revd Paddy McGlinchey, chaplain, and Flo Ferguson, the Student Centre's domestic bursar, with Tanya Johnston, the Centre's secretary (front).

aged to explore their gifts and talents by becoming involved in various aspects of worship.

Students take part in a

variety of outreach projects, including 'Late Love', where they give out tea and coffee to those heading home from

local pubs and clubs between 1.00am and 3.00am in the morning. The Centre is also home to the Oasis Café which aims to provide good food at affordable prices in a friendly environment.

Outside the academic year, the Centre is also available for accommodation for people visiting, studying or perhaps attending a conference in Belfast; its close proximity to Queen's University, local coffee shops, bars, restaurants and Belfast city centre makes it an ideal accommodation venue for any visitor to Belfast.

(To find out more about the work of the Church of Ireland Student Centre and the accommodation provided, contact the Chaplaincy office, tel. 028 9066 7754; email: coisc@dnet.com)

IICC appoints new ecumenical officer

The Irish Inter-Church Committee (IICC) has recently announced the appointment of Philip McKinley to a newly-created position of Ecumenical Officer, based in Dublin.

Funded by the 15-member Churches for a pilot period of three years, this part-time position aims to strengthen local relationships among Churches around the country.

Roman Catholic Bishop Gerry Clifford, who convenes the Steering Group of the IICC, commented that Mr McKinley "brings a wealth of knowledge, energy and expe-



Philip McKinley

rience in inter-Church work to this new post.

"The first priority of this new initiative will be to identify the

range of inter-Church groups already meeting together in local communities."

Mr McKinley lives in Dublin, is an active member of the Church of Ireland and has worked for the past three years as the Dublin-based Project Officer for the Church of Ireland's Hard Gospel project. He has also been the project-coordinator of the *Directory of Migrant-led Churches and Chaplaincies*. He has a degree in Theological Studies from Trinity College Dublin and also a Radio Broadcasting qualification.

Speaking about his new

post, Mr McKinley said: "I am deeply excited about contributing to the rich ecumenical journey in Ireland.

"Next year's centenary of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference provides a wonderful opportunity for Christians to reflect and rediscover the calling to be united in Christ".

Mr McKinley started his new post on 18th May and will be based in an office within the Irish School of Ecumenics in Milltown Park, Dublin.

The Project will be managed by the Irish Council of Churches, but steered by the Inter-Church Steering Group.

Cathedral to host Gothic horror

Dublin's Christ Church Cathedral will be transformed into a cinema on 3rd June to enable the Cathedral to play host to a screening of the 1922 silent movie, *Nosferatu the Vampyre*.

The international concert organist, David Briggs, will return to the Cathedral's organ to improvise a live sound track to F.W. Murnau's 1922 silent classic, based on the Dracula story.

"Although Murnau's film, *Nosferatu*, was an unauthorised adaptation of the Dracula story, it is still redolent of

Bram Stoker's original plot," explained Peter Parshall, Music Development Officer at Christ Church Cathedral.

The film will be projected on a huge screen in the Cathedral's nave. "The experience of watching a silent film in a setting like Christ Church is breathtaking," Mr Parshall added.

(*Nosferatu* will be screened on Wednesday 3rd June at 8.00pm. Tickets cost €12 (€8 concessions) and are available from: musicassist@cccub.ie, or tel. 01 677 8099, ext 216.)

Anniversary celebrations in Co. Antrim parish

St John's parish church, Donegore, Co. Antrim, Diocese of Connor, will mark its 350th anniversary with a weekend of celebrations on Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th June.

There will be an exhibition entitled '350 years of life and worship in Donegore' in the parish hall in Templepatrick on Saturday 6th from 12 noon to 4.00pm, during which time, Donegore church will be open for visitors. A shuttle bus service will run from the hall - where refreshments

will be served - to the church. During that time, visitors to Donegore will be able to listen to organ music, courtesy of several visiting organists.

There will be a service of thanksgiving and celebration on Sunday 7th at 3.30pm, when the preacher will be the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Revd Alan Abernethy.

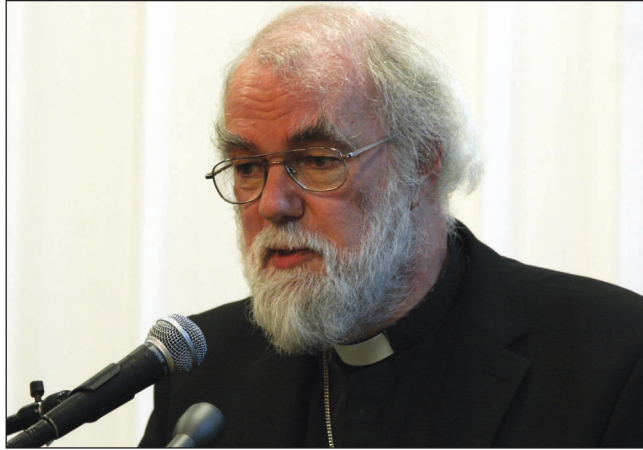
Everyone will be welcome to these anniversary events and it is hoped that many past parishioners and friends of Donegore will be present for the celebratory weekend.

ACC-14 ends with Draft Covenant referred for further work

The Jamaica meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC-14), in declining to endorse the Ridley Cambridge Draft of the proposed Anglican Covenant, has complicated yet further an already lengthy process towards a Covenant that might bring healing to a Communion in a state of seemingly perpetual crisis of division.

The procedure surrounding this decision by ACC-14 was confused and some felt deeply aggrieved that a decision to reject a resolution seeking to detach section 4 from the Ridley Cambridge Draft for further study and possible revision was effectively reversed by a further amendment.

Bishop Mouneer Anis, President Bishop of Jerusalem and the Middle East, told Anglican TV there had been "manipulation", adding: "Part of this crisis is due to distrust. I must say that all what happened increased the distrust."



Archbishop Rowan Williams

In his closing presidential address, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, voiced uncertainty about the future of the Communion: "Some people speak of the future of the Communion as a federation – a much more dispersed association than it now is. An association within which some groups are more strongly bound to one another and some groups less strongly bound. I suspect

that may very well be if not all Provinces do sign up to the Covenant, and I hasten to add that's not what I hope. It is what I think we have to reflect on as a real possibility."

Archbishop Williams was the celebrant at a closing Eucharist in Kingston's Cathedral of St James in Spanish Town.

The preacher was Bishop John Paterson, the Bishop of Auckland, New Zealand,

and the retiring Chair, who finished his long and distinguished ministry with the ACC with this service.

In his homily, Bishop Paterson reflected on his years of service and spoke directly about ACC-14: "Our meeting has been characterized by some rigorous debates, but with respect and even affection across the floor of the house. As your outgoing Chair, I have been deeply grateful for that. And that surely is one of the many gifts that we can return home with, knowing that the ACC has met well, and the renewed confidence we can have in the strength and the life of the Anglican Communion."

(The full texts of the resolutions ACC-14 may be found online at <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2009/5/12/ACNS4630>. A feature on the meeting by the Church of Ireland's representatives, the Revd Maurice Elliott and Kate Turner, is scheduled for the *Gazette* issue of 5th June.)

New Bishop of Harare

Canon Chad Nicholas Gandiya, Africa regional desk officer for the Britain-based mission agency USPG: Anglicans in Mission, has been elected to serve as the next Bishop of Harare, Zimbabwe.

As he prepared to leave for his new position, Canon Gandiya made an impassioned plea for Anglicans to concentrate on "the real issues" facing Africa, which he said was dogged by hunger, ignorance, corruption, famine and the spread of diseases such as HIV and AIDS and malaria.

"We have many more problems than the well-publicised problem of rights for gay men and lesbians," he said in an interview with Ecumenical News International.

Canon Gandiya will suc-



Canon Chad Gandiya

ceed Bishop Sebastian Bakare, who has served as the Diocese's interim bishop since December 2007, when Bishop Nolbert Kunonga was deposed after the Church said he had illegally separated

from the Province of Central Africa by installing himself as Archbishop of Zimbabwe.

Bishop Kunonga has been an avid supporter of Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe and his Zanu-PF party. Anglicans say Kunonga has supported the intimidation and persecution of Anglicans in Zimbabwe for opposing his leadership and that of President Robert Mugabe.

"I am under no illusions about the problem that the Anglican Church faces," Canon Gandiya said. "I was told I will be inheriting a crown of thorns, but I believe I will succeed if I have the prayers and help of the entire Anglican Communion."

The Rt Revd Michael Doe, General Secretary of USPG said: "We are delighted to

hear the news that Chad has been elected the next Bishop of Harare. His work with USPG has brought him into contact with much of the Anglican Church in Africa and the Indian Ocean, and I can think of no better person to bring leadership and reconciliation to this troubled Diocese. All of us at USPG pray that God will bless his new and very challenging ministry."

Canon Gandiya and his wife, Faith, have three children: Tatuwanashe, 26, Tariro, 23 and Tonderai, 21.

He was born in Manicaland, eastern Zimbabwe, in 1953, studied for ordination at St John's College, Nottingham, and took higher degrees at the University of Zimbabwe and Michigan State University in the United States. [ENI]

European religious leaders meet the Presidents of the EU Institutions

The Revd Jean-Arnold de Clermont, President of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), starting the series of interventions by Church leaders at an 11th May meeting with the Presidents of the European Institutions in Brussels, referred to the current global economic situation.

He said: "The present crisis calls for a substantial change. People have lost confidence in a system which is mainly based on individual profit. The present crisis is an ethical crisis in which Churches and religious communities need to highlight ethical values such as human dignity, freedom with responsibility, solidarity and sustainability."

The meeting, entitled 'Economic and financial crisis: ethical contributions for European and global eco-



The Revd Jean-Arnold de Clermont

nomic governance', was hosted by the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso and Hans-Gert Pöttering, President of the European Parliament.

Bishop Nifon, from the Romanian Orthodox Church, requested that "any response

to the present crisis should go beyond individualism and nationalism". He reminded the meeting about the spiritual dimension: "My daily bread is a material concern; the daily bread of my neighbour is a spiritual concern."

Bishop Wolfgang Huber,

from the Protestant Church in Germany, stressed that "any action in response to the crisis needs to be measured with the yardstick of solidarity; but not only by solidarity among the present population of the world, but also by solidarity with future generations. This might not always lead to popular political decisions. But Churches and religious communities will stand by politicians who are committed to solidarity and sustainability."

Representatives, both of the religious communities and of the European Institutions, underlined that religions had no monopoly in defining European values. But religions were a major actor in European societies and had an important contribution to make to the future of Europe and the world. [CEC News]

Chinese Christians urge prayers to mark 1989 crackdown

A group of Chinese Christians has urged Churches around the world to mark the 20th anniversary on 4th June of the suppression of protesters who had joined thousands of students and civilians in Beijing's Tiananmen Square to call for democracy and clean government.

"The fact that this tragic massacre happened 20 years ago and is still not allowed to be commemorated in China by the Chinese government should remind the international community that the road towards true freedom for the Chinese people is not an easy one," said Bob Fu, founder of Texas-based ChinaAid, who had been one of the student leaders in the Tiananmen Square movement.

The group also asked the Chinese government to reveal the truth about the crackdown, to commemorate vic-

tims and to compensate their families.

The signatories came from mainland China, Canada, the United States, Taiwan and Hong Kong, Australia, France, Japan and Singapore.

ChinaAid said many signatories had, like Fu, been directly involved in the 1989 protests, and had since converted to Christianity.

They said that the Tiananmen crackdown had caused a number of social ills, including the "indifference and numbness to morality, the rampant corruption of government officials, the rapid escalation of social disparity."

ChinaAid said that, according to the Chinese government, the official death toll from the crackdown was between 200 and 300, while the Chinese Red Cross, however, estimated that the actual number of deaths was 10 times higher. [ENI]

Top British court rejects Hindu request for open-air pyre

A Hindu man has lost his legal fight to be cremated on a traditional open-air pyre in Britain's countryside to ensure himself "a good death".

The High Court in London told 70-year-old Davender Ghai that the open-air pyre violated a 107-year-old law governing cremation.

Mr Ghai conceded that "my claim is provocative ... in a nation as notoriously squeamish toward death as our own," but he argued that open-air "natural cremation grounds" would not "offend public decency - as long as they were discreet, designated sites far from urban and residential areas."

However, High Court Justice Ross Cranston ruled that Britain's Cremation Act of 1902 and other laws "are clear in their effect: the burning of human remains, other than in a crematorium, is a criminal offence".

This, he insisted, "effectively prohibits open-air funeral pyres" in the country.

Britain is home to more than 600,000 Hindus, and many families pay thousands of dollars to fly the remains of their relatives back to India for traditional funeral pyres.

The court ruling backed the opinion of the government's Justice Minister, Jack Straw, who fought Mr Ghai's challenge on grounds that others in the community would be "upset and offended" by pyres.

Many Britons "find it abhorrent that human remains were being burned in this way," Mr Straw said.

The case had been running for more than three years, after a local government council in Newcastle, in the north east of England, rejected Mr Ghai's application for a permit for an open-air cremation in a remote site in the area. [ENI]

The General Synod

General Synod is over for another year, but the work of the Church goes on in parishes up and down the island. At the end of the day, the parish is the heartbeat of the Church and thank God for those faithful laity and clergy who give so much to the work, witness and service of God's Church.

On reflection, I think the weekend Synod worked well, but it is a huge expense to delegates and consideration must be given to this. The Primate's address was superb and the debates certainly generated much discussion. Why no 'thank you' to the Chair at the end of Synod? He thanked everyone for their contribution. It was a mistake by Synod not to say 'thank you' to our Primate for guiding us through the exacting and demanding business; I hope this matter will be addressed for the future.

As a venue, Armagh is by far the 'best', though it is a long way from Tipperary and even West Cork, and I know many issues have to be taken into consideration.

One of the disappointing and

disquieting features of Synod this year was the totally unacceptable and intemperate language used by certain delegates. There seems to be an attitude developing in debate that suggests if I don't get my way or agree with the other person, I have the right to make a vicious personal attack; certain comments were wounding and unChristian and sadly no attempt was made, at least publicly, to apologise. My hope and prayer is that in our diversity there will always be a spirit of generosity in all our discussion and a total elimination of all that hurts or harms the cause of Christ.

Thank you to everyone involved in the organisation of the Synod and of course to the Dean and Chapter of St Patrick's Cathedral Armagh for a very uplifting and inspiring service of the Eucharist.

John Bond (The Very Revd)

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Canon Patrick Comerford is to be congratulated on his blog which justly won a prize at General Synod. It contains two references to me (8th May, though I am not named) which deserve comment.

First, as seconder to Bill No.1 (that the Church's 1999 Declaration on the 39 Articles of Religion be printed in future editions of the Prayer Book), he says that I wanted the Bill "amended and watered down". In fact, the Bill's proposer and I both supported the amendment. It had been suggested that the unamended Bill might

have the effect of changing the doctrine of the Church, which we had not intended. The Legal Advisory Committee had (understandably and correctly) said that determining this question was beyond its remit; but it was universally agreed that if the amendment were passed (as it subsequently was) there would be no doctrinal implications. This is clearly what Synod intended.

Secondly, Patrick claims that I "pilloried" the Benedictine mystic Dom Bede Griffiths. I said that Griffiths sought to persuade C.S. Lewis to integrate some aspects of Hinduism into his Christian thinking. I quoted Lewis as responding: "Your Hindus certainly sound delightful. But what do they deny? That has always been my trouble with Indians - to find any proposition they would pronounce false. But truth must surely involve exclusions?"

I said that Lewis and Griffiths were lifelong friends; I did not intend to pillory, and I don't think members of Synod would have taken me to be doing so.

Dermot O'Callaghan

27 Monument Road
Hillsborough
BT26 6HT

Why, I ask, was this year's General Synod in Armagh given so little publicity by the media?

I refer to all three television channels - BBC1, UTV and RTÉ. There was no coverage whatsoever on BBC *Newsline* or UTV *Live* programmes, and Radio Ulster hardly gave it a mention. RTÉ did cover it briefly on its Saturday evening news programme and viewers got a fleeting glimpse of the Conference Hall in the City Hotel.

Radio Ulster's *Sunday Sequence* did not carry any report of the Synod's highlights; listeners instead got a rather tetchy interview with the Primate who obviously wasn't happy with the line of questioning by a rather confrontational interviewer.

Gone are the days when listeners were given an extensive account of the proceedings over the three-day midweek period on the Friday evening.

What a disappointment to find the General Synod service getting the 'thumbs down' by both the BBC and UTV and also

BBC Radio news programmes. Why, I wonder, should Radio Ulster, which regularly broadcasts the opening service of the Presbyterian General Assembly, so blatantly discriminate against the Church of Ireland's national service?

No doubt BBC/UTV producers would not have ignored the service in Armagh Cathedral had the powers that be in the Church of Ireland been able to persuade the Queen to attend while she is in the province.

I have already written to one broadcasting authority in Belfast and I trust a bishop or an archdeacon in the Church of Ireland will do the same. Being so completely ignored like this by the entire media just isn't good enough. The fact that the General Synod was held for the first time at the weekend should at least have been a newsworthy event.

W. Breen

20 Georgian Villas
Hospital Road
Omagh

Issues raised by Archbishop Jensen

I really must take exception to the suggestion in your editorial of 1st May that the intention of the "Anglican Church in North America" is "both positive and godly". I do not understand how you can propose that an accommodation should be sought with those who left the US Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church in Canada and further fractured the Body of Christ.

They left because they could not make their narrow and intolerant views prevail, for which I am thankful.

The comments of Archbishop Peter Jensen in the recent *Gazette* article (1st May) are timely and thought-provoking. The Archbishop is right when he directs the attention of the Anglican Church back to Scripture.

The famous saying is true - "In war, the first casualty is truth". The biggest casualty in the recent split in the Anglican Communion has been the blow to our commitment to the authority of Scripture.

The Anglican Communion has always been able to include within its membership a wide range of Churches and people and can still do so. Yes, there are anomalies, but what you propose is an anomaly much too far.

I do not wish to belong to a Church where the likes of Archbishop Jensen or, even worse, Akinola dictate what I have to believe.

Gerald Williams

8 Gloucester Avenue
Donaghadee
Co. Down BT21 OJA

The crisis that we face is at heart about the nature of the Gospel itself. Will we continue to affirm the good news of Christ's death for sin and the power of the Spirit to transform his people? Or will we redefine the definition of godliness and obedience?

My prayer is that the Church of Ireland will not be split by the preaching of a false Gospel.

Edward Vaughan (The Revd)
15 Shrewsbury Hall
Shankill, Co. Dublin

Letters

Letters should be sent to the Editor at *The Church of Ireland Gazette*, 3 Wallace Avenue, Lisburn, Co. Antrim BT27 4AA, or by fax to 028-9266 7580 (prefix 048 from the Republic of Ireland), or by email to gazette@ireland.anglican.org. All correspondence should contain a postal address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and/or brevity. Correspondents should indicate if they do not wish their email addresses published. No letter will be published anonymously and all letters should be as brief as possible.

A shadow flashed by the study window where Steve was working at his desk.

It had been so quick that he wasn't sure if he was seeing things, so he went to the door, where he encountered two rather breathless adults who had just arrived in the rectory grounds.

"Did you see him?", barked the man. "Where is he? We're sure he came in here."

"Who do you mean?", asked Steve.

"A young lad about thirteen," explained the woman, who appeared to be the man's wife. "We saw him painting graffiti on some walls. When we shouted at him to stop, he ran off. We gave chase, but," she smiled ruefully, "he was a good bit faster than us, and we think he came in your gate."

"Well, this leads into the back garden," said Steve. "Come in and we'll have a look."

Steve walked around the perimeter of the rectory garden, where many shrubs were growing.

"Steve! Steve! Please don't let on I'm here. Please don't let them see me."

The voice came from an escallonia bush. Steve went to look behind the bush and there, sure enough, was a young lad Steve recognised as Jack Martin.

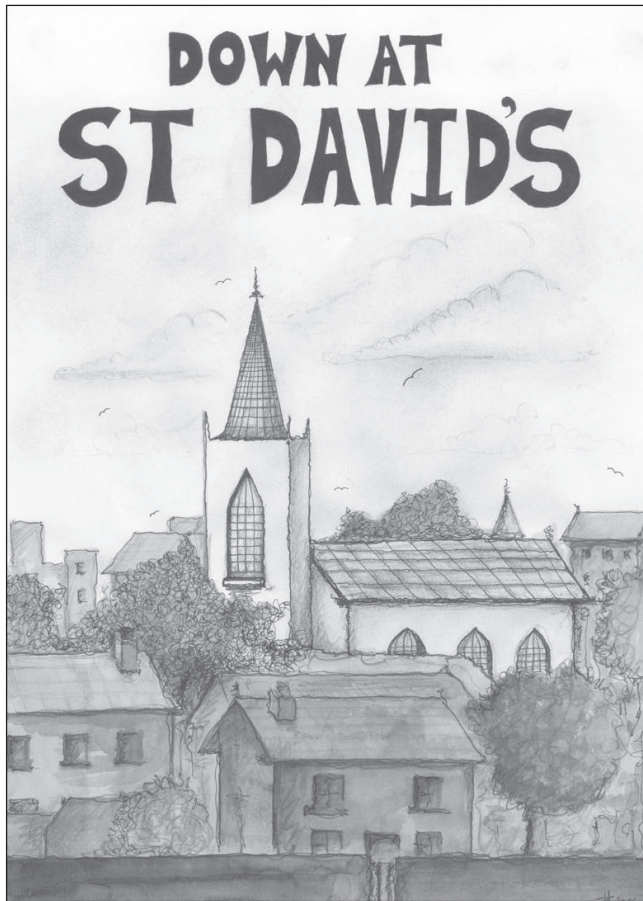
"I don't know why I did it. I'm really sorry. I won't do it again, I promise. Just don't let on I'm here."

But the couple had heard Jack's voice and came over as he scrambled from behind the bush.

"That's him!", yelled the man excitedly. "That's the one!"

The man approached Jack menacingly.

"Look, I know this lad," Steve intervened. "He's a member of the parish here." And then turning to Jack, he said: "What on earth were



By Ted Woods

you doing painting graffiti? I would have thought you'd have known better."

"I only did one," Jack protested.

"You did at least three,"

Her husband was still seething. "I've a good mind to call the police," he said, pulling his mobile phone from his pocket, "and I'll certainly write to the

*'Please, please, not the police!
My parents will kill me.
I'll never do it again, I swear'*

exclaimed the man angrily. "We were watching you, you little blackguard. And you going to a private school," he added, pointing at Jack's school uniform. "You're going to be punished for this."

"Ah now, don't be too hard on the boy," pleaded the man's wife, softening at the sight of Jack's tear-stained face. "The reverend knows him. Let him deal with the boy."

school."

"Please, please, not the police! My parents will kill me. I'll never do it again, I swear." Jack crumpled to the ground, tears pouring down his cheeks.

"Well, OK," the man relented. "I'll leave it with you, reverend, but I trust you not to treat the matter - or that brat - lightly," he said, "and you (pointing his finger at Jack), if I ever see you spraying paint again,

you won't be so lucky."

As the pair walked off, Steve said to Jack: "What got into you? It's not like you to do such a thing."

"I had to, or I couldn't be in their gang." And out came the story of a group of bullies in school who were making the younger ones do something illegal to be in their gang.

"You won't go to the police, will you?", pleaded Jack, "and you won't tell my dad and mum?"

"I'm making no promises," said Steve, "and now I think it's best if you go straight home."

"What was all that about?", asked Fiona who had just arrived home. "I met a very irate couple going out as I came in."

Steve explained what had happened. "And I'm in a bit of a quandary what to do. Jack's father will hit the roof if he hears about this and Jack will be in deep trouble. If it's just a prank, Jack will have learned his lesson already. But, if Jack has got into bad company, this may be just the incident to get him out of it before he gets into worse trouble. It's hard to know what's best."

"Well," said Fiona, "if it had been Andrew, we would have wanted to know, wouldn't we? And it's not doing Jack any favours to keep it quiet - nor is it fair to his parents."

Steve rang Jack's home and got his mother.

"We don't know what's got into Jack recently.

He's been acting very strangely. He's been spray-painting walls in our garden and even did some of our windows. His father and I are demented. At least now we know what's behind it. We'll take it from here. I can assure you the matter will be dealt with and thank you very much."

No doubt, at the moment, Steve would be a hate figure in Jack's life. But who knows? When he is older, he just might be grateful.


Edward Vaughan

The two roads (the book of Proverbs)

Do you remember the famous poem by Robert Frost, *The Road Not Taken*? In it, he writes:

*Two roads diverged in a wood,
and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the
difference.*

Frost is reflecting on a choice in life that he feels has made all the difference. It was a choice that had a lifelong impact. I am not sure he had the book of Proverbs in mind when he wrote the poem, but he could have.

Solomon, the great writer and teacher who is the author of Proverbs, speaks about wisdom using a similar analogy to Frost. Seeking after wisdom is like the choice between two roads - and which one we choose has a huge impact on our lives. Indeed, the choice is even more critical than in Frost's poem, because it will have an impact on the next generation as well.

In our church, our youth minister has named the young people's ministry 'Generation'. I think it is a great name, because it reminds us that we are raising up the next generation of Christian believers. Quite simply, we cannot give to our children that which we do not possess ourselves. If we do not have an active and lively faith in Jesus, there is no way that we will be able to pass it on to those who come after us.

Proverbs draws on the image-

ry of life as a walk down a long road. The voice of the narrator is that of a father who speaks to the next generation and seeks to persuade them to listen carefully to his words. There are two roads in life, the narrator says: there is the Road of Fools and there is Wisdom Road. To a large degree, what happens in our life will depend on which road we choose.

The world view of Proverbs is that there is a pattern in life. It is God-ordained and we cannot escape it. God has built a law into the very rhythm of life. "By wisdom the Lord laid the earth's foundations, by understanding

that fools get. If you walk the path of wisdom, you will reap the harvest that comes to the wise.

So what are these two roads like? The road of the fool can look very attractive, because fools can prosper for a time. To use that great Irish expression, fools can be very 'cute'. But fools sow stupidity and reap a harvest of pain.

Here is the identikit picture of a fool from Proverbs: fools commit evil (1: 16) and reap evil (1: 18); they live in darkness (4: 19), which leads them to disaster (1: 25-27); their actions lead to death (2: 18); they are cut off from the blessing of the Lord (2: 22); and they experience the Lord's curse (3: 33).

God has so ordered creation that there is a law at the heart of our existence. If you walk the path of fools, you will get what fools deserve.

So what about the Wisdom Road? Wise people will be blessed

(4: 12); protected (2: 11, 12); will live without fear (3: 23, 24); and will have health (3: 8) and a long life (4: 10). Their reward will be prosperity and public acclaim (3: 4).

Wisdom is a choice, like choosing one of two roads. So how does one attain wisdom? Proverbs says over and over again that it comes from the fear of the Lord and is nurtured by meditation on his word. The great thing about wisdom is that it is offered to 'the simple' - to normal people, like us. The road to wisdom begins with fearing the awesome judgement of the Lord and listening with an obedient heart to his word.

*'... fools can be very "cute".
But fools sow stupidity and
reap a harvest of pain'*

he sets the heavens in place." (Proverbs 3: 19, NIV). Wisdom is inherent in God's creation. It is just as Paul says: in life you will reap what you sow (2 Corinthians 9: 6). What is planted in one season will be harvested in another. If you do not plant, you will not reap.

To put it another way, there is a result to the way that we live. The wisdom literature of Solomon is not naïve about life. Ecclesiastes is especially savvy about the realities of life that are sometimes cruel and unexpected. Yet Proverbs affirms that our actions bear fruit. If you walk the path of fools, you will reap the reward



Alison Rooke

I bought her sweets today

"I hate her," she said.

"No, you don't; you don't hate anyone," I remonstrated.

"I hate her."

My younger daughter isn't given to histrionics. In fact, she rarely gets upset, still less angry. Something was bothering her, so I did what mothers do in such circumstances: I sat her down and tried to discover where the problem lay.

As is often the case with people with special needs, the difficulty had arisen because of a misunderstanding; to have dismissed it as laughably ridiculous would have been wrong, because to my daughter, this was a serious issue.

So, I listened; I sympathised; I reasoned; I explained; I affirmed; I reassured - and was priding myself on my parenting skills when, at the end of it all, she interrupted: "I hate her."

Exasperated,

I retorted:

"Well, between ourselves, my love, there are a lot of people I'm not too keen on either, but we can't go 'round saying we hate them."

As soon as I'd said it, I realised the implications of my statement and so, as is often the case, the childlike honesty of those too easily dismissed as intellectually inferior is humbling in our world of polite play-acting and duplicity.

I have been thinking a lot recently about 'hating' - about hating individuals, groups, organisations - and I've decided we must all hang our heads in shame. The lyrics from the *South Pacific* song come to mind:

*You've got to be taught
To hate and fear - and in this
country we know all about that.*

*You've got to be taught
Before it's too late ...
To hate all the people your
Relatives hate.*

There is no room for complacency in any of us, for I suppose the ultimate 'holier than thou' attitude is found in those showing contempt for others' bigotry and their consequent superiority over the openly sectarian, racist or whatever other prejudice may come to mind.

I have a dog - a loyal, loving, docile golden retriever. She is now elderly and stiff, but still a lovely old lady. She has been pulled, hauled, ridden upon, but always she has responded with

privacy of our homes. Centuries of Christian teaching and worship, but still we wrestle with our inner selves and that apparently impossible command "to love our neighbour as ourselves".

*You've got to be taught to
be afraid
of people whose eyes are
oddly made,
And people whose skin is a
Diff'rent shade.*

And what can we add to that list? And 'people of different religions'? And 'people who worship God in a different way'? And 'people who are gay'? And 'people who are High Church'? And 'people who are Low Church'? And 'people who are obese'? And 'people who are drug addicts'? And 'people who are disabled'?

And 'people who chew gum'? And 'people who have tattoos'? And 'people who don't cut the hairs growing

out of their ears'?

We could go on all day, but I suppose generally it could be summed up by thinking of people who are not like us; people who look different or who do things differently from how we think things ought to be done. We, who know it all; we, who are so wise.

Anyway, daughter thankfully is now over her little outburst and equanimity has been restored.

"All okay today?", I ask, in that casual tone mothers adopt, when inwardly their hearts are pounding.

"Yes, we are friends; I bought her sweets today."

Would all our prejudices were so easily overcome.

*'... we must all hang our
heads in shame'*

gentleness and love. That is, until she sees a man wearing a navy blue jacket.

It goes back to a postman with whom obviously early on she had some sort of altercation. Now, in her old age, she will be ambling quietly along the street and will suddenly cause me to jump out of my skin as she charges over, barking fiercely at some poor, unsuspecting gentleman who has the misfortune to be wearing a short navy jacket - she's back to her postman days.

I suspect it's the same with us all; latent within us are fears and prejudices and too often there is a gap between our public utterances and those expressed in the

**GOD AND SCIENCE -
ESSAYS ON THEISM IN THE
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
AND INTELLIGENT
DESIGN**

Catalyst Pamphlet 14

**Publisher: Catalyst 2009;
pp.60**

Price: £2.00/€3

THIS important booklet contains essays which engage with two areas of current debate at the faith-science interface. One is the militant atheism of Richard Dawkins; the other is Intelligent Design, which schools are under pressure from some MLAs to incorporate into their science curriculum.

Dawkins' atheism is addressed by Archbishop Donald Caird and Prof. Roddy Cowie of the Department of Psychology at Queen's University Belfast and lay reader at nearby St Bartholomew's church.

Archbishop Caird recalls the conversion of a well-known atheist philosopher of a previous generation, Prof. C.E.M. Joad. In his book, *The Recovery of Belief*, Joad described how this came from a reasoned examination of the claims of Christianity.

Roddy Cowie (*The Importance of Ignorance*) suggests that Dawkins labours under "the delusion of godlike knowledge", claiming far more than he is justified in doing; he challenges Christians to understand what the issues are on the deepest level. Indeed, all four essays in this booklet should help Christians do just that.

Addressing the theme of Intelligent Design are two other professors at Queen's University. Peter Bowler is head of the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, while Norman Nevin is a former head of the Department of Medical Genetics and an elder of Crescent Church, Belfast.

Peter Bowler accuses creationists of not being able to present a coherent scientific alternative to standard models of biological evolu-

tion and the age of the earth, and can only highlight isolated areas which standard science has not (not yet?) been able to explain satisfactorily.

Prof. Nevin's position is diametrically opposite. He draws attention to features of biology which pose difficulties for standard evolutionary theory and which, he proposes, show how the complexity of biological systems point to an intelligent cause. His essay raises the question: Is this simply a sophisticated version of 'god-of-the-gaps'? But all may agree with Professor Nevin's final statement: "As science progresses, let's see where the evidence leads".

Ron Elsdon

**FAITH REBORN: MISSION
IN A (WONDERFULLY)
STRANGE NEW IRELAND**

**Author: The Revd Dr
Stephen Skuce**

**Publisher: Cliff College
Publishing**

Price: £7.00

THE Revd Dr Stephen Skuce has set himself a very high task with this book – to begin to re-envision mission, Roman Catholic and Protestant, in the whole island of Ireland. He is particularly well situated for this task. Having ministered as a Methodist minister in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, as well as in Sri Lanka, he now lectures in mission studies in Cliff College, near Sheffield.

It is this distanced view of an insider that allows him a particular overview, focusing not on the past but on the future – what is the future of Christianity (and the Churches) in Ireland? The author argues that this is as a movement rather than institutions – and this is starting to happen in unplanned ways, in spite of the Churches. He argues this case well, particularly how this process has worked out in the British context, and this will be a blunt reality check for many as to what is happening here.

Where does mission fit into this new vision of Irish Christianity? There is a central role for mission in this 'post-everything Ireland', but, "rather than exciting new strategies, innovating ideas and expertly trained practitioners, mission in Ireland needs saints and disciples", going back to the roots of Christianity before the conversion of Constantine. He proceeds to suggest how this mission would be lived out, not so much in terms of institutional actions, but in attitudes and models. This is not 'pie in the sky' thinking, but is regularly grounded in the realities of life and Church on the island.

Dr Skuce has set himself a very high task. In this short book, he has begun a conversation that is badly needed in Ireland: a discussion not focused on the past, not seeking to reinvent what has gone before, but a discussion that seeks to start again: "It is not often that a 1,500-year-old institution is given the opportunity to reinvent itself, such is the opportunity in Ireland today." Dr Skuce has succeeded in bringing wider mission thinking to bear on the current Irish situation.

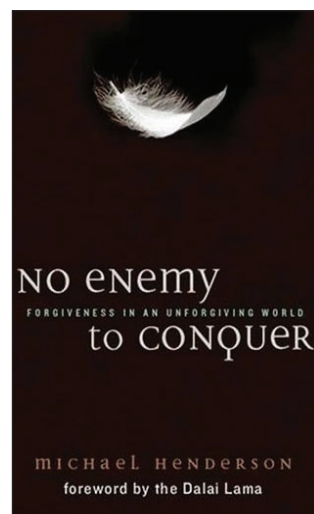
This book needs to be interacted with and responded to, as much by the people in the pews as those in leadership. It is not a difficult read and has interesting discussion questions for each chapter. It may well not be the last word in this conversation, but it is a very useful starting point.

Ruth Jackson

**NO ENEMY TO CONQUER:
FORGIVENESS IN AN
UNFORGIVING WORLD**

**Author: Michael Henderson
Publisher: Baylor University
Press, 2009; pp.214**

OVER the past 15 years, Michael Henderson has written extensively on various aspects of forgiveness, and this excellent book is his latest offering on the subject. By profession, he is a



freelance journalist, and his familiarity with the written word is reflected in the fluidity and easily-read style of his prose.

The book is divided into six chapters, each of which explores one particular aspect of forgiveness and reconciliation. Within each chapter, Henderson tells the stories of individuals (many of whom he has either met or with whom he has corresponded) and communities which have found the courage to forgive apparently unforgivable wrongs, and then worked – often, indeed, with the original perpetrators of these wrongs – for reconciliation and the rebuilding of communities. Each chapter is then concluded by one or two short essays by experts in the field who analyse the processes at work which the chapter has illustrated.

The author tells his stories with compassion and admiration, and many are genuinely moving. I am less certain about some of the concluding essays which tend to remove the heroic actions of individuals into the rarefied atmosphere of dry academic monograph. His own contribution, though, is insightful and thought-provoking, and the book is also excellently presented, having no typographical errors and including very useful notes, bibliography and index.

A well worthwhile reflection on a topic of universally vital importance.

Stephen R. White

THE HOLY ISLAND OF LINDISFARNE

Author: David Adam

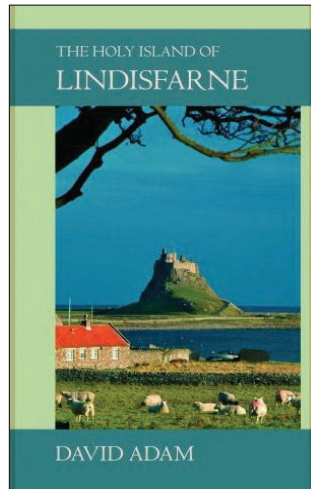
Illustrator: Monica Capoferri

Publisher: SPCK, London

THE cover of the book is attractive. It beckons the reader inside. Maybe one is seeking refreshment of the soul, or calm for the troubled mind, but whatever the reason, the "holiest place in holy England" encourages one within.

The first chapter is aptly entitled, 'A Now and Then Island.' It is joined to the mainland by a causeway exposed twice daily at low tide, thus endowing the cradle of England's Christian heritage with a degree of magic and drama. There are wooden poles, sunk into the seabed to mark a safe crossing; their wonderful perspective is captured by Monica Capoferri in a simple but stark black and white drawing. Each chapter has an appropriate illustration and all add greatly to the enjoyment of the text.

The author, Canon David



Adam, was vicar of Holy Island for 13 years. He writes: "During the service in which I was inducted to the parish, I was given the key to the church, a stole embroidered with the figures of Aidan and Cuthbert, and a copy of the Lindisfarne Gospels. These signs represented a history of more than their thirteen hundred years and reminded me of the great responsibility I faced."

The book reveals that the author is a very substantial

historian in his own right. The reviewer was intrigued by the two and a half pages of 'Timeline' at the end of the book. Within that space, the author managed to chronicle important events from 547-1944. A particular entry is relevant, and brief, namely 673 - Birth of Bede!

Adam narrates the history of the island and its peoples with passion and the ability of the true storyteller. His work is liberally sprinkled with quotations from: *Bede, A History of the English Church and People*. It is worthwhile reading the problems encountered by both Aidan and Cuthbert and some even before their day. One problem is the dating of Easter. At the time when Oswy was king, he followed the Celtic dating system, whereas his wife adhered to the Roman calendar, so one was feasting while the other was still fasting!

This book is stimulating and maybe it actually entices the reader to go and see the place for oneself. The only downside is a slight weariness with all the violence and treachery, albeit countered by the devotion and example of many, and, of course, by the amazing lives of Aidan and Cuthbert.

Elizabeth Butler

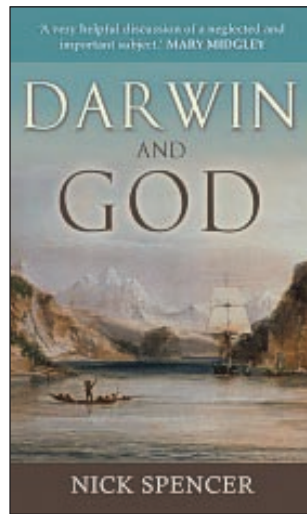
DARWIN AND GOD

Author: Nick Spencer 2009

Publisher: SPCK

"HAVING held the hand of his favourite child in the last degrading week of her short life, he (Darwin) was never able to reconcile what he saw about him with the benevolent, loving God of the Christian story." This extract from Spencer's admirable book is not the picture of Charles Darwin which we generally hear or probably expect.

We have become accustomed, through religious propaganda, to view Charles Darwin, whose bicentenary we mark this year, as an atheistic monster, with a caricatured primatial head, hell-bent on destroying religion itself through his rigorous and systematic examination of creation and life-forms. In many ways, as too often in



popular religious thinking, fiction is more attractive than fact when we are faced with experimentation and provisionality.

The above quotation points to a central argument of Spencer's book: that such direct, tangible experience of the death of the vulnerable weakling disposes the father of a family (in which three children died young and the other seven suffered ill-health) to move away from any benign doctrine of providence or design in creation.

This is complicated by the carefully argued recognition that Darwin's ultimate move to agnosticism was one of a man shy to enter strictly theological arguments when his sophisticated scientific discoveries of matter brought him into direct conflict with Victorian metaphysics.

Spencer depicts the conventional Anglican religiosity of the Victorian Englishman, which was Darwin's lot all the time he was voyaging on *The Beagle*. He also depicts the conflict in which this rational Anglicanism stood with his wife's fervent Unitarianism, a sharp difference on which they agreed lovingly to differ.

Although he lived in controversy all of his adult life, Darwin drew the support, for example, of Charles Kingsley, author, clergyman and professor of modern history in the University of Cambridge. He was not totally ostracized by the religious of his day. Kingsley spoke of being freed from two common superstitions by Darwin's theory of

evolution: "From two common superstitions, at least, I shall be free ... 1) I have long since, from watching the crossing of domesticated animals & plants, learnt to disbelieve the dogma of the permanence of species. 2) I have gradually learnt to see that it is just as noble a conception of Deity, to believe that he created primal forms capable of self development into all forms needful *pro tempore & pro loco*, as to believe that he required a fresh act of intervention to supply the lacunas wh[ic]h he himself had made."

This year marks the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth. We even have an exciting interlocking series of stamps to show for it. For many, Darwin remains the great wrecker of religion. This book challenges such panic-stricken assumptions, while being fair about Darwin's eventual religious alienation from all but theism.

It may surprise many that he was once naïve enough not to know that our own James Ussher's computation of the world's beginning in 4004 BC was not something which could be found in the Bible itself. He also was so moved, when in South America as a young man, by the fact that a black slave whom he verbally chided lowered his hands and raised his face for the white master, that is Darwin, to strike him physically while he spoke. Such was the power of social conditioning and manipulation. This experience catapulted him to see in what would emerge as the argument for evolution an argument for colour-free human dignity.

Readers must decide for themselves. Nobody can deny that Darwin has revolutionized humanity's perception of itself. Nor can anyone deny Spencer's powerful analysis of Darwin's human plight from a Christian theological perspective: "Put bluntly, as soon as Christianity moved away from the foot of the cross and lost sight of the crucified God, it became defenceless against accusations of suffering and injustice."

+Michael Clogher



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**The Revd Lynda Peilow
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DIOCESE OF CLOGHER



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For further information, please write to:

The Rt Revd Dr M. Jackson,
The See House, Fivemiletown,
Co. Tyrone BT75 0QP.

Expressions of interest in the above vacancy should be made in writing by Friday 5th June 2009.

Diocesan Secretary

Church of Ireland Dioceses of Connor and Down and Dromore

The Dioceses of Connor and Down and Dromore together include over 50% of all those who are members of the Church of Ireland. The two Dioceses share a Diocesan office in Belfast. The Diocesan Secretary is the senior manager responsible for administering the two dioceses, reporting separately to two Diocesan Council Structures and working with two Bishops. Managing a team of ten staff, the Diocesan Secretary has responsibility for providing advice and support to all parishes in the dioceses and to a range of associated organisations. The Diocesan Secretary must also support and advise a range of Diocesan and other committees, including the Diocesan Synods. As a result of the impending retirement of the existing incumbent, the Diocesan Councils now wish to appoint a new Diocesan Secretary.

Reporting to designated members of the two Diocesan Councils the Diocesan Secretary will take overall responsibility for leadership and day to day management of the Diocesan office and staff and for developing and delivering its plans. The post will be attractive to a dynamic and highly experienced manager who has the ability to assist the Dioceses and parishes to develop and grow to meet changing needs, while ensuring that they operate within appropriate legal, moral and constitutional constraints. The successful applicant is likely to hold appropriate qualifications and have extensive experience in a senior management role. Applicants must have the capacity to work with a wide range of bodies and individuals and to display good decision making, diplomacy and clear leadership. Excellent communication skills and a good understanding of all aspects of general management practice are essential. Candidates must be practising Christians and be able to wholly identify with the beliefs, purposes and values of the Church of Ireland.

Salary £44,789 - £60,464 per annum

The post is permanent, subject to a six month probationary period.

Application is strictly by application form which can be obtained from:

Williamson Consulting, 244 Kingsway, Dunmurry, Belfast, BT17 9AE.

Telephone: 028 9062 5511

The Diocesan Councils reserve the right to only interview candidates who, from information provided, appear to best meet the criteria for the post.

Closing date for receipt of applications is:

Monday 8 June 2009 at 12.00 p.m.

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PROVIDES ACCOMMODATION FOR:

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**Alan Nairn at 20 Mageough Home,
Cowper Road, Rathmines, Dublin 6. Tel. 01 497 1620**

From Northern Ireland 003531 497 1620

Email: mageoughhome@iolfree.ie

Web: www.mageoughhome.ie

DUNFANAGHY: Modern, 3-bedroom house to let, excellent location close to Blue Flag beach, horse riding, golf course and town centre - available May to September £400/£500 per week; tel. 07788 435821.

EDINBURGH: City centre accommodation for holiday or retreat with small, inclusive Christian community at Emmaus House, 14 Gilmore Place. www.emmaushouse-edinburgh.co.uk; Email: info@emmaushouse-edinburgh.co.uk. Tel. 0131 228 1066.

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JIM BROWN, LLCM(TD), ALCM: Offers Postal Tuition in Popular

Singing. 14 Brownhill Meadows, Irvinestown, Co. Fermanagh, N. Ireland BT94 1DW. Mobile: 07854 407601.

PORTSTEWART: Holiday cottage to let, 3 bedrooms, five minutes' walk from beach, secluded garden, all mod cons. Telephone: 028 7083 3567.

TREAN HOUSE FARMHOUSE B&B: Inishowen, Co. Donegal. Charming accommodation in stone-walled countryside beside the sea; special 3-day rate; contact Joyce Norris @ 00353749367121 or www.treanhouse.com

WANTED - OLD AND SECONDHANDBOOKS: Theology, Church history, Bible commentaries, Irish interest, etc. Good prices paid for libraries and smaller lots. Will travel to collect. Phone John Gowan, 028 6634 1239, or fax. 028 6634 1844.



SAINT PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL ♦ DUBLIN

Applications are invited for the position of
TENOR LAY VICAR CHORAL

SALARY: €10,440 PER ANNUM

Commencement: September 2009

For further details please contact:
Mr Peter Barley, Organist and Master of the Chorists
Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin 8
Tel: +353-1-453 9472; e-mail: peter.barley@stpatrikscathedral.ie
Closing date for applications: 12th June 2009

Kilsaran Union of Parishes
Fête and Family Day Out

In the grounds of Bellingham Castle Hotel, Castlebellingham, Co. Louth (7 miles south of Dundalk);
Monday 1st June 2009 from 2.00pm;
Admission €2. Children free.
Usual stalls, side shows, competitions, teas, bouncy castle, etc.

A great day out for all the family



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has bed-sit style apartments at its Upper Leeson Street, Dublin 4, headquarters, available to rent.

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References required.

Further details from:

Protestant Aid
74 Upper Leeson Street, Dublin 4.
Tel. 01-668 4298

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400th anniversary Flower Festival

Friday 11th September - Sunday 13th September 2009

Opening times: Friday and Saturday 10am - 7pm daily
Sunday 2pm - 7pm



Marking 400 years since Down Cathedral was granted a Royal Charter and became a Cathedral.

Proceeds in aid of Down Cathedral Improvement Fund

Coach parties and groups welcome
Booking essential

Please contact Mrs Joy Wilkinson
028 4461 4922 (Cathedral Office)
028 4272 9518 (home)
Down Cathedral English Street
Downpatrick County Down BT30 6AB

400 YEARS CHARTER
1609 - 2009

400th ANNIVERSARY FLOWER FESTIVAL



LOOP SYSTEMS FOR HEARING AID USERS

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Saintfield 9751 9226.

New Gazette board office-bearers elected

At the recent annual general meeting of the board of directors of the Church of Ireland Press Ltd., which owns the *Church of Ireland Gazette*, two new office-bearers were elected.

David Pyle becomes chairman of the board in succession to the Ven. Raymond Hoey and Patrick Good is the new honorary secretary, succeeding the Revd John Auchmuty.

Mr Auchmuty will remain on the board as a director, and Archdeacon Hoey has retired from membership of the board and as a director of the company.

David Pyle, who was born in Dublin and educated at Campbell College Belfast and Trinity College Dublin, has been a member of the board of the Church of Ireland Press for 18 years. He followed a career in news



David Pyle

distribution, before becoming a management consultant and eventually a director of a consulting firm in Dublin.

He is a parishioner of St John's, Sandymount, Dublin, and, until recently, was chairman of the Friends of St



Patrick Good

Patrick's Cathedral Dublin.

The incoming honorary secretary, Patrick Good, a barrister by profession, is a parishioner of St Columba's, Knock, Belfast, Diocese of Down, where he is a member of the select vestry and a parochial nominator. He

is also vice-chairman of the Church's Complaints Committee.

Mr Good comes from a Church of Ireland background, his late father, the Very Revd Rossy Good, having been both Dean of Down Cathedral and rector of Killaney and Carryduff, Diocese of Down.

Speaking to the *Gazette*, Mr Pyle paid tribute to the work of his predecessor: "I have very much enjoyed working on the board with Archdeacon Hoey. He has wonderful gifts which made him a really good chairman: he has patience, good humour, extensive knowledge and the ability to keep a meeting moving. We are all very sorry to see him leave."

On his own appointment, Mr Pyle added: "Archdeacon Hoey is going to be a very hard act to follow."

Funding cut for Church of Ireland schools could have 'McDonald' effect - Senator

Government moves to cut funding to Protestant schools must be reversed and there cannot be a situation where a "McDonald's type of schooling - always the same everywhere" is allowed to develop, a Fine Gael Senator has urged.

European Election candidate for Ireland East, Senator John Paul Phelan, said: "In the haste to cut and run, the Minister found what he supposed was a soft target and saved the grand total of €2.8 million. Rashly, he has overturned a long-established settlement and angered a community. I do not accuse the Minister of ill-intent but rather a lack of reflection, and I urge him now to take time and consider more carefully whether this is a saving we can afford."

Senator Phelan said that the Constitution separated Church and State, but that it also recognised the role of faith in society and the fundamental right of parents to



Senator Phelan

have their children educated in schools that share their values.

He said that Mr O'Keefe had been quoted as saying he saw no reason why Protestant fee paying schools should be treated differently to Roman Catholic ones. The Senator commented: "If that is his position, then he really needs to think again. Outside of the family, schools are the most important means of enabling a minority to maintain its religious identity and cohe-

sion as a faith community. If this State is to be truly pluralist and value diversity in practice and not simply theory, then it cannot afford to be so careless in its treatment of Protestant schools."

Ordering the Gazette

For full details about placing an order for *The Church of Ireland Gazette* locally or by post or online (PDF format), simply telephone our office at 028 9267 5743

(prefix 048 from the Republic of Ireland; 0044 28 from overseas).

Office hours:
Mon. - Fri.,
9.00am - 1.00pm
Outside office hours, please leave your name and number on our answerphone and we will call you back.

APPOINTMENTS

The Revd Amanda E. Adams, Curate-Assistant of Ballymena and Ballyclug, to be Rector of the Grouped Parishes of Ballyrashane and Kildollagh, both Diocese of Connor. Institution in St John the Baptist, Ballyrashane, on Thursday 2nd July, at 8.00pm. The Revd Michael E. Johnston, Vicar of the Waterford Group of Parishes, Diocese of Waterford, to be Rector of the Shinrone Group of Parishes, Diocese of Killaloe.

The Revd Jonathan (Jono) D. M. Pierce, Rector of Kilmore (Crossgar) and Inch, to be Rector of St Finnian's, Cregagh, Belfast, both Diocese of Down.

RETIREMENTS

Canon Brian J. Courtney, Rector of Enniskillen, Diocese of Clogher; 31st May 2009.

Canon Stanley Johnson, Rector of Clondehorkey, Diocese of Raphoe; 30th June 2009.

Canon James H. Sims, Rector of Clonallon (Warrenpoint), Diocese of Dromore; 31st July 2009.