



AUGUST 2016

THE DIOCESE OF TRURO

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Pastoral Letter from the Bishop of Truro

"For we do not proclaim ourselves we proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Christ's sake. For it is the God who said; "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2Corinthians chapter 4 vv. 5 and 6)

Yesterday morning I attended a Mass in the Abbaye de Landevennec in Brittany. I was there with Steve Wild and Perran Gay for a time of retreat and prayer. Many of you will know we have a close link with the Benedictine Abbey through St Guenole, who came from France to Cornwall bringing the Gospel message of God's love for all. For many years church leaders have taken pilgrims there to pray and talk together about our differences and our similarities and to pray for unity.

Every day they celebrate the Mass at 11.15 a.m. they will do so again today. Of course their prayers like ours will go out to the community in Rouen grieving over the horrific attack that took place yesterday.

We condemn violence wherever it happens and the wicked nature of this latest atrocity is shocking. I am sure we will all be praying for our colleagues in the Roman Catholic Church this week. I have sent a message of support to Bishop Mark (the Roman Catholic Bishop of Plymouth) who is with so many others at the World Youth Day in Poland.

Chairman - Bishop Tim Thornton
Vice Chairman - Reverend Steve Wild
CTC Missioner - David H Smith
Treasurer - Paul Durkin
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No doubt you will also be concerned to ensure the right steps are taken for us to be alert and aware of the safety of all who attend our churches as I know we always are. There has been some advice circulated to churches which you can read at these links.

<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-protective-security-advice-for-places-of-worship>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>

I believe our first task is to continue to witness to the message of the Gospel which is, as we know, good news for all.

At a time when there is understandable anxiety and real fear on the part of many there is a tendency to stand aback from others and to build metaphorical walls between us. This is not the Christian way. At this time we need to ensure we continue to extend hospitality to others and to work hard to ensure we listen to all members of our community.

Our message is one that is difficult for many to understand and accept but it is one that claims God loves us all and wants us to keep working together and keep listening to each other and find ways to create community. At a time such as this more than ever our prayer should be for peace and for justice right around God's world and for the ability to keep listening to the Gospel message that the light will shine out of the darkness.

A prayer for unity which has been used over the years by the Companions of St Guenole

O God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we affirm our faith in you as the Holy One, and our conviction that you have called us to witness to the perfect unity of your love, to continue in the work of reconciliation, and to reveal you to the world. Enable us to seek the peace and unity which is your will. Amen.

Feel free to use this letter as you think right for your circumstances.

Yours

Christians in Russia Fear KGB-Style Crackdowns After Putin Signs Law Banning Evangelism



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill visit the Cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Savior at Valaam Monastery, Russia, July 11, 2016.

Russian evangelicals are expressing alarm in light of President Vladimir Putin's signing of a so-called anti-terrorism law on 7th July that imposes harsh restrictions on religious freedom by banning religious gatherings in homes as well as evangelism and missionary activities.

How this law will be applied when it goes into effect on July 20 remains "a very huge question mark," according to Joel Griffith of the Slavic Gospel Association.

Other leaders fear the move signals a return to Russia's "shameful past" of Communist persecution of Christians, Radio Free Europe reports.

Griffith told Mission Network News in an interview on Friday that the law "could stop missionary activity to anybody but representatives, registered organizations and groups, it would require every missionary to have documents with specific information proving connections to a registered religious group."

If enforced as strictly as the text says, Griffith notes, missionaries and anyone desiring to share the Gospel outside of their church can expect fierce penalties.

Governments and human rights advocates all over the world have condemned the law.



Russian President Vladimir Putin attends a religious service at the Cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Savior at Valaam Monastery, Russia, July 11, 2016.

Thomas J. Reese, chair of the the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, called the law "deeply flawed," saying it would "make it easier for Russian authorities to repress religious communities, stifle peaceful dissent, and detain and imprison people.

He added that neither the new measures "nor the currently existing anti-extremism law meet[s] international human rights and religious freedom standards."

The new "Yarovaya" law, named after the bill's author Irina Yarovaya, contains new police and counterterrorism measures eerily reminiscent of Soviet-era KGB tactics that grant state security agencies the authority to access private communications, regulate Christian proselytizing on the internet, and requires telecom companies to store phone conversations, text messages, and videos for six months and provide that data to the government.

Attorney Vladimir Ryakhovsky of the Moscow-based Slavic Centre for Law and Justice, an advocacy group that defends religious freedom in Russia, noted on his Facebook page that July 7, the day that Putin signed the bill, represents a "black day on the calendar."

Those who wrote the statute simply "do not understand religious practice," he continued, urging Christians not to "succumb to panic when [the government] threaten[s] you with all kinds of horror stories."

Ryakhovsky's warnings are merited as reports have also surfaced that Christian groups that meet in homes are already being harassed.

According to Forum 18 News Service, deputy bishop Konstantin Bendas of the Pentecostal Union recounted that even before the law passed he knew of an incident near Moscow in which a local police officer threatened a group of Pentecostals, reportedly telling them "Now they're adopting the law I'll drive you all out of here." Bendas now expects such "zealous enforcement" to continue.

Central to understanding the controversy is Russia's persistent refusal to grant land for Protestants to construct church buildings. Because of this they are forced to hold their worship services and charitable activities in residential areas and the new law takes no account of this practice, thereby making it easy for the government to persecute them.

"The obligation on every believer to have a special permit to spread his or her beliefs, as well as hand out religious literature and material outside of places of worship and used structures, is not only absurd and offensive, but also creates the basis for mass persecution of believers for violating these provisions," said Sergei Ryakhovsky who heads Protestant Churches of Russia, in her column on The World Post.

The SCLJ will advise Christians from Moscow on the new law in a web-streamed seminar on July 19. The Yarovaya law goes into effect on July 20.

COMMEMORATING 'REFORMATION 1517' IN ENGLAND



A Statement from the Presidents of Churches Together in England who represent the Western traditions of the Church, The Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby (Archbishop of Canterbury), H.E. Cardinal Vincent Nichols (Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster), The Revd Dr Hugh Osgood (Free Churches Moderator), Bishop Eric Brown (Pentecostal President) and Billy Kennedy.

Their statement is issued with the prayerful support of the Orthodox President, HE Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain

Setting the tone

As Presidents of Churches Together in England we encourage all churches in England to mark the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 with sensitivity as we acknowledge our unity in Christ. We have learnt over the past century that unity is achieved by walking together, and we have grown in communion, friendship, reconciliation and healing.

During this anniversary we want to be able to listen to the truth that is in each other, to hear our different stories, and build bridges of deeper understanding and respect.

Speaking at the Inauguration Eucharist of the General Synod of the Church of England in November 2015, Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher to the Papal Household, said, 'The Christian world is preparing to celebrate the fifth centenary of the Protestant Reformation.

It is vital for the whole Church that this opportunity is not wasted by people remaining prisoners of the past, trying to establish each other's rights and wrongs. Rather, let us take a qualitative leap forward, like what happens when the sluice gates of a river or a canal to enable ships to navigate at a higher water level. The situation has changed dramatically since then.

We need to start again with the person of Jesus, humbly helping our contemporaries to experience a personal encounter with Him...Justification by faith, for example, ought to be preached by the whole Church – and with more vigour than ever. Not in opposition to good works – the issue is already settled – but rather in opposition to the claim of people today that they can save themselves thanks to their science, technology or man-made spirituality, without the need for a redeemer coming from outside humanity.'

Setting the scene

The course of the English reformation was long and complicated, whereas in most of what is now Germany and Switzerland it was sharp and short. That means that the anniversary of Martin Luther's 95 theses on 31st October 1517 is but one date in a long English history which lasted from Henry VIII's break with Rome in 1532-36 to the Restoration Settlement of 1662.

As religious wars convulsed Europe, Protestant and Catholic reformers alike sought with integrity and faithfulness to bring the church closer to the will of Christ. As they did so they lent shape to what became modern Europe. During England's long reformation, streams of Christian life that we now call Catholic, Anglican and dissenting, were all present, and have been shaped by what they experienced.

We acknowledge with sorrow that during the years of the English reformation our ancestors in the faith inflicted unspeakable violence on each other.

We rejoice, however, that by the grace of God we have learnt to look at that history through the eyes of each other's martyrs, to appreciate their integrity, courage and self-sacrifice, and above all their faithful witness to God.

As we commemorate the 500th anniversary, we want therefore to acknowledge both the good that came out of this period of our history, and also the pain inflicted and the scars that remain.

We therefore urge the churches in England to keep this anniversary together in the spirit of five 'Rs'

- **Rejoicing** – because of the joy in the gospel which we share, and because what we have in common is greater than that which divides; and that God is patient with our divisions, that we are coming back together and can learn from each other.
- **Remembering** – because all three streams of the Reformation have their witnesses and one church's celebration could be another's painful memory; and yet all believed they acted in the cause of the gospel of Jesus Christ for their time
- **Reforming** – because the Church needs always to grow closer to Christ, and therefore closer to all who proclaim him Lord, and it is by the mutual witness of faith that we will approach the unity for which Christ prayed for his followers.
- **Repenting** – because the splintering of our unity led us to formulate stereotypes and prejudices about each other's traditions which have too often diverted our attention from our calling as witnesses together to the mercy of God in proclamation and service to the world.
- **Reconciling** – because the call to oneness in Christ begins from the perspective of unity not division, strengthening what is held in common, even though the differences are more easily seen and experienced.

In national and local events, whether together or separately, we pray that our churches may honour each other and give thanks for our growing friendship and fellowship in the Gospel.

Stop trying to fix the poor says Methodist Vice-President



- Photos of Rachel Lampard MBE at the Conference [here](#)
- Video of Rachel's address is available [here](#)
- Audio of Rachel's address is available [here](#)

The newly inducted Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, Rachel Lampard MBE, has called for the Church to stop 'problematising' and trying to 'fix' the poor, but "address the problems and pain that not having enough money brings."

Speaking to the Conference gathered in London today, Rachel Lampard said: "We live in a world where we need 'oceans of justice', where in the UK more than 1 in 4 children live in poverty, and 2 million people die each year because of a lack of safe water or sanitation.

"When we look at the poor and those in need of justice, do we see a problem - or do we recognise the face of Jesus Christ? Sadly we have 'problematised' the poor so much that we choose to look for their faults rather than address the problems and pain that not having enough money brings."

Ms Lampard celebrated the Methodist desire to get 'stuck' in to help people and encouraged them to tackle injustice, not by trying to 'fix' people, but by listening and learning from people who are seen as 'fragile'.

"We are all fragile. Deep down, or perhaps not so very deep, we have flaws, fears, hurts, struggles. God doesn't come along and say 'Right, I'll sort you out and make you into a line of perfect Christians.' Rather God chooses vulnerability, precariousness, fragility.

"By holding each other's fragility and vulnerability we tread into precious, holy spaces. It is then that we see the thousand hidden injustices in our world.

"The Church is committed to justice. This isn't some optional extra. This is part of the mission of the Church. To be involved not only in the alleviation of human suffering, but also in the eradication of the roots of that suffering."

Ending her address, Ms Lampard issued the challenge: "A commitment to justice and holiness changes us and will change the Church, if we have the courage."

The Bishop of Truro and the Dean of Truro are pleased to announce the appointment of The Rev Professor Mark David Chapman, MA, Doctor of Philosophy, Prof of the History of Modern Theology, Vice-Principal of Ripon College, Cuddesdon as Canon Theologian. He will be welcomed and installed at Evensong in Truro Cathedral on October 2nd at 4pm.

A very warm welcome to **Majors Stephen and Amanda White** who have joined the newly formed Salvation Army South West Region replacing **Majors Ian and Jean Harris**. We look forward to their sharing of news and events in Devon and Cornwall.

Welcome to **Sarah Yardley** of Creation Fest recently coopted onto the CTC Executive.

Welcome also to the Church Leader **Rev Carl Smethurst** of the Baptist Union who replaced **Rev Jez Brown**.

And farewell and grateful thanks to **David Hampshire** who helped to keep RE in the forefront of our County Education Department.

THE PARENTS CHARTER

If a child lives with criticism
he learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility
he learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule
he learns to be shy.

If a child lives with shame
he learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance
He learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement
he learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise
he learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness
he learns justice.

If a child lives with security
he learns to have faith

If a child lives with approval
he learns to like himself

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship
he learns to find love in the world.