

The Free Church Council of Wales

The President's diary of events ((No 4–April - August 2018)

May 10 Attended **Wales Interfaith Conference** – *Reforming World Views – - Perspectives on One Humanity, Morality and Home* -arranged by the Onyx Link Foundation. It was full day conference with eight speakers presenting a variety of standpoints/experiences/ stories from the background of their religion. It was a very interesting an educational day with the obvious emphasis that there was more in common with the religions than differences. The First Minister sent a message of support and the Head of Equality of the Welsh Government and some of his staff were present.

May 24 Our Council Meeting. There was a good attendance for a day with a very full Agenda. There was a presentation about the place of Religious Education in the new curriculum which is being developed. (Report sent to Denominations and Press). There were presentations about Theological Training and this are going to be further discussions on this matter; also Gethin Rhys' Reports as Cytûn's Policy Officer. Wynford Ellis Owen gave a presentation on the work of *Cynnal* – the new Counselling service for clergy of all denominations and their families. The Rev Debbie Hodge, the Chaplaincy Secretary of the UK Free Church Group, attended to explain the current position as there had been major changes in the last five years. Again this is a matter which FCCW shall continue to consider. Vaughan Salisbury had a substantial list of matters for consideration and initial discussions were commenced on some matters which shall have detailed consideration in the future following consultations with individuals and denominations. The usual reports were received from the Denominations; the Treasurer and Rev Paul Rochester, London. It was agreed to change the constitution so that two from both South and North Wales can be nominated members because the two Sections had ceased to function. It was noted that the Gee Medals would be presented in the North this year and in both North and South during 2019. Messages were sent to Rev Geraint Tudur on his retirement and to congratulate Rev Dyfrig Rees on his appointment as successor. (A full copy of the minutes can be obtained by e mail from Mrs Helen Jones, FCCW Secretary - rhys.helen.jones@btinternet.com)

June 6 A populous meeting of the **Cross part Group on Faith** at Y Senedd. The topic was Transgender Issues: Faith Perspectives. The Guest Speaker was Bishop Gregory Cameron who gave a very clear and persuasive presentation with conviction. He said that there was no Biblical teachings about Transgender and he referred to Biblical quotations and the various interpretations given to them. He cited examples from his personal experience of having to deal with Transgenders. In the final analysis a Christian must accept that Jesus' teachings showed that every individual deserves the love of God.

A meaningful and informed discussion ensued. It was emphasised that the church should not be judgemental on this issue and that it is important to consider every individual case and the way in which they come to God.

June 11-12 Attended the Annual Conference of the Baptist Union of Wales at Nant Gwrtheyrn. Had the opportunity, in my greetings on behalf of the guests, to acknowledge and thank the Baptists for their contribution to FCCW over the years. I appreciated very much to be invited to participate in the Induction Service of Rev. Aled Davies as the BUW President for 2018-19. There was a complete and very interesting programme over the three days. The Lewis Valentine Memorial Lecture was delivered masterfully by Rev. Pryderi Llwyd Jones. There were numerous interesting informal talks by various individuals with Rob Nicholls responsible for effective morning meditations. There were several interesting presentations re mission work and opportunities in different areas. There was much more but I was not a witness to those!

Jul 9-11 Attended the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Wales in Wrexham - by invitation. Processed in the Moderator's parade as Rev Brian Huw Jones transferred the Moderatorship to the Rev. Brian Matthews. There were many reports, presentations and lectures along with effective acts of worship. Amongst the most memorable and blessed presentation was one by the Revd. Dr Robert Cunville of the Presbyterian Church of India who spoke about his experiences and years of service with Rev. Billy Graham.

Jul 13 Meeting of the Inter-Faith Council of Wales. A good cross section of the representatives of the different religions present and everyone contributing openly. Officials from the Welsh Government gave a presentation about the proposed legislation which would remove the legal defence of reasonable punishment of a child.

August 11 Helen Jones (Secretary of the FCCW) and I conducted the Worship at the CYTUN stand at the National Eisteddfod of Cardiff.

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