

2017 Notes

Where from here? –Promoting Holiness and Tackling some of Today’s Big Issues

Rev Ken Todd who is Chairman of Headway (Ireland) gives this news update. Headway (Ireland) is part of Methodist Evangelicals Together.

Our Next Conference

As a follow up to the last Methodist Conference, we plan to hold a Conference on the subject: “Tackling Decline – what next?” A panel of speakers from within and outside Methodism will take part. Our Secretary of Conference, Rev Dr John Stephens will give the Keynote address and our Home Mission Secretary, Rev Dr Heather Morris will join others on the panel including Archdeacon David McClay of Willowfield Parish and Pastor Philip Emmerson of Emmanuel Church. The event is open to all and will be held at Seymour Street Methodist Church, Lisburn, on Wednesday 3rd May 2017 at 7.45 p.m.

Our Focus on Holiness

The Ex-President of the British Conference, Rev Steve Wild, speaking at the Headway Breakfast focussed on our call to personal soul-winning and prayer. Mission is marked by conversions and discipling. Previously Rev Dr Ken Wilson encouraged the Methodist people in Holy living. Some church home groups are studying, to good effect, Dr Wilson’s book “Making Holiness Attractive.” This is published by Headway (Ireland) and is based on a talk given at a Headway breakfast at East Belfast Mission. The book is available through our website. Peter Lynas, of Evangelical Alliance, N. Ireland, will address the next Conference Breakfast at Magheragall Methodist Church on the subject “Issues facing Christians today.”

Our Concerns on Same-Sex Marriage

Since we are a movement of Methodists committed to prayer for revival and witness to the evangelical faith, it is unsurprising that we are consulted on the subject of same-sex marriage. Our initial reply is that homophobia is wrong, we are called to compassion but we uphold the traditional teaching of the Methodist Church in Ireland which is the scriptural position that Marriage is between one man and one woman. Marriage, as Jesus defines it in Matthew 19 -where a man leaves his father and mother and joins with his wife in covenant marriage- is a core Christian belief. The plain meaning of Scripture does not allow us to make this an “agree to disagree” issue. It is core orthodoxy for bible-believing Christians and has been the teaching of the church for two thousand years. We are reminded that the World Church overwhelmingly supports traditional marriage. The revelation in Scripture about homosexual practice is clear and consistent in Old and New

Testaments, and until the end of the last century, universally understood as so, by the church. We further caution against the view which implies that the Holy Spirit is synonymous with consensus. Of course we need the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit in all our conversations and in knowing the mind of God, not least in a “post-truth” society. However, the Holy Spirit will neither contradict Himself nor the Scripture which He inspired. Inclusion has its place and so of course has exclusion of error, (though not necessarily those who might err). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth who convicts of error, converts sinners and encourages unity. God does not govern His Church by consensus but by truth spoken in love. In our discussions about same-sex marriage, “it would be easier to take another path today in our culture, but Evangelicals believe their view of Scripture does not permit them to change their view of marriage” (Ed Stetzer).

Notwithstanding the controversies of these exciting times, opportunities abound for witness to Christ and we are thrilled to hear reports of conversions in Methodist churches. We are part of a growing World Church. We rejoice that we are Christ’s and Christ is God’s. Some resources from Headway (Methodist Evangelicals Together) can be found on our website at www.headwayireland.com

Welcome to our Annual General Meeting

The AGM of Headway (Ireland) will be held on Friday 9th June 2017 at 7.30.p.m. in Seymour Street Methodist Church, Lisburn. All are welcome. At this meeting we will take time to survey some of the issues to be raised at the next Methodist Conference.

Why not join with us?

If any of the above interests and resonates with you, why not consider becoming a member of Headway (Ireland)? That way you will be kept informed of our thinking and be able to contribute to it. You will also be made aware of others who share similar views. Membership involves an annual subscription of £15 and as part of that you will receive quarterly copies of the British Methodist Evangelicals Together magazine. Please send your details to the Headway Secretary, Rev Ken Robinson at 33 Thomas Street, Portadown BT62 3NU.