



Church of Ireland primate defends decision on US Episcopal Church

BBC News NI - The Church of Ireland Primate has defended a decision by senior bishops in the Anglican church to restrict the US Episcopal branch for allowing same-sex marriage.

The move means it will be suspended from participating in the life and work of the Anglican communion.

Archbishop Dr Richard Clarke was at the meeting when the decision was taken.

Speaking on Radio Ulster's Sunday Sequence, he said the news had been exploited for political reasons.

"People do need to read (the statement) very carefully rather than the headlines that have been put on it," he said.

"Those who wanted to push - as they're entitled to do - an agenda about gay marriage, wanted to say 'look the Americans have been sanctioned, they're being humiliated'," he said.

"The reality is they haven't.

"The first decision the primates made was we wanted to stay together, we wanted to walk together, while leaving enough breathing space, or faith space, so that hopefully we can grow together."

He added that he was "always open to changing (his) mind" on the issue of same sex marriage.

"My own view is that I believe in equality absolutely and completely and I don't believe that God is homophobic," he said.

"It's a difficult one to call. I would hope that we'll work at ways in which we might find some form of pastoral accommodation that would be true to the scriptures and to our understanding that every human person is made in the image and likeness of God and is equally loved by him and must be equally loved by us."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-35337511>

Presiding bishop of Episcopal Church showed extraordinary grace : Bishop David Chillingworth

Most Rev David Chillingworth, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, writing in his blog on Saturday January 16, says, "It was a difficult week – very difficult. I'm working on some material for the church press and I need a little time to think and digest.

"I did some Radio material – Radio 4 Sunday Programme tomorrow – and we have a 'holding statement' on the SEC website which says this:

"In advance of the Primates Meeting, there were many predictions of breakdown and of fracture in the life of the Anglican Communion. It is

therefore encouraging that the Primates have agreed to ‘walk together’ and that a Task Group will be established to work on our ongoing relationships. “However that unity has come at some cost to the ability of the Communion to express the diversity which has always been a valued characteristic of the Anglican Way. The consequences which follow the decision of The Episcopal Church (in the United States) to change its Canon on marriage are a sign of that change. The Scottish Episcopal Church sees itself as a diverse church in a diverse Communion. It is important to us that we seek to sustain our unity as we continue to address issues of human sexuality in our General Synod. “Further consideration will be given to these matters by our Faith and Order Board and by the College of Bishops.”

The Primus continues commenting on “the extraordinary grace shown by the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church”. He states -

“Meanwhile I am still reflecting on the extraordinary grace shown by the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church in response to the ‘consequences’ which the meeting decided were an appropriate response to the actions of TEC. I was greatly privileged to work closely with Bishop Michael all week. From the depths



Presiding Bishop, Most Rev Michael Curry

of his personal and family history of slavery, racism and exclusion, he drew this remarkable statement:

“I stand before you as your brother. I stand before you as a descendant of African slaves, stolen from their native land, enslaved in a bitter bondage, and then even after emancipation, segregated and excluded in church and society. And this conjures that up again, and brings pain. The pain for many will be real. But God is greater than anything. I love Jesus and I love the church. I am a Christian in the Anglican way. And like you, as we have said in this meeting, I am

committed to 'walking together' with you as fellow Primates in the Anglican family."

<http://www.bishopdavid.net/>

Church of Ireland in turmoil over same sex marriage

Belfast Newsletter

On Friday a liberal activist in the Church of Ireland (Col) said he was "appalled" by the decision, while a leading evangelical countered that it did not go far enough, and that it would simply fuel further tensions in the church.

The Irish leadership issued a statement on the matter.

In the statement, Armagh Archbishop the Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke said: "The language of the primates' gathering and communique was 'not about sanctions' but rather wanting to walk together and create safe distance in order to do so over the coming years."

He declined to make any further comment about what the decision would mean for Irish Anglicans.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/northern-ireland-news/church-of-ireland-in-turmoil-again-over-same-sex-marriage-1-7164223>

US Episcopal Church censored by Anglican Communion over same-sex marriage issue

Irish Times

FiME spokesperson and Church of Ireland member Dr Richard O'Leary said "I and many Anglicans in Ireland are appalled at this anti-gay decision by ...

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<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/us-episcopal-church-censured-by-anglican-communion-over-same-sex-marrige-issue-1.2498683#.Vpoh77CJFkw.mailto>

Remembering 1916: Surprise as Óglaigh na hÉireann presents National Flag to C of I National School

There was a lovely surprise for one of the pupils at St Mary's (Church of Ireland) National School in Carrigaline in County Cork when the whole school assembled on 8th January to receive their gift from the State of the Irish Flag to mark the centenary of 1916. When the party from *Óglaigh na hÉireann* arrived, she realised that her father, Sergeant Wrenne, was one of the group presenting the flag.

To commemorate the centenary of the 1916 Rising and to celebrate 100 years since the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, the Government asked *Óglaigh na hÉireann* to deliver the National Flag to every Primary School in the country.



Óglaigh na hÉireann present the national flag to schoolchildren at St Mary's Church of Ireland National School, Carrigaline, County Cork

On Friday 8th January, St Mary's NS Carrigaline welcomed members of the Defence Forces, two from the Navy and two from the Army. After the acting Principal welcomed the group, the Rector read from a letter written by her maternal Grandfather of his experiences fighting in the Dublin Rising which helped set the scene. The Officer in command of the group then explained a little about the history of the Flag and the Proclamation after which she asked the children several questions to ensure that they all knew

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the rules surrounding the care of the National Flag (for instance it is never put on the ground, it flies above any other flag, etc.). The children then sang Amhrán na bhFiann and some of the parents who were there for the occasion remained behind for refreshments.

Remembering 1916: A touch of drama at Presbyterian conference

With a week to go to the Church in the Public Square Conference 'The Future of our Past: Remembering and Reassessing 1916', the organisers of have announced that the writer and historian, Philip Orr, will be reading two adaptations of speeches from his new play 'Halfway House'.

The author of a number of books about the local experience of the Great War, the Carrickfergus-based author has written and directed several dramas set in key periods of Irish history.

Philip works on a range of community development projects specialising in the arts and history and dealing with issues that relate to contested identities. His new drama, Halfway

House, explores the events of 1916, but 50 years on.

Set in 1966, the drama plays out in a snowbound pub in the Sperrin Mountains when two women meet by chance. During the conversation that follows the two discover personal connections to the wartime events from half a century before, both in Ireland and abroad.

Interviewed last month on [Soul Surmise](#), Rev. Steve Stockman's blog, Philip said, "Each of my two women has a very different family history as one woman's father was involved in the Rising and the other had a father who fought with the Ulster Division.

"In order to get them together for a challenging conversation about the past, I imagined that on a snowy night in the early weeks of 1966, the two characters find themselves stuck on a mountain pass on the way to Derry/Londonderry. They end up sharing the same room for an unplanned overnight stay in a pub in the hills. That is when the talking starts..."

Organised jointly by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Union Theological College and Council for Church in Society, College Principal, Very Rev. Professor Stafford Carson announced that

with a week to go to the Conference, [registration](#) has been extended to Monday 18th January.

“Interest in the Conference has far exceeded our expectations with over 300 people attending. Along with the gifted team of high calibre speakers and responders, who will bring their expertise and insight to the Conference, I am delighted that Philip will bring a unique touch to the event in dramatic form.

“As we discuss how the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme have been assimilated into the mythology of Irish history and as a result, how they have helped to create conflicting accounts of the past, I am also looking forward to hearing excerpts from Philip’s play.”

Currently showing at community venues across Northern Ireland, Halfway House will be performed on Thursday, 21st January at 7.30pm at Fitzroy Presbyterian Church, Belfast.

[‘Songs of Praise’ services in Dublin](#)

Tallaght and Clontarf will be the locations for the next two Come&C diocesan services. The occasional Songs of Praise type services will take place throughout Dublin and Glendalough



COME&C

this year as part of the Year of Come&C. Each service will highlight one of the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion.

The next service will take place on Saturday February 6 at 3.00 pm in St Maelruain's Church, Tallaght. The theme will be 'To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom'.

The Church of St John the Baptist in Clontarf will host the service on Saturday March 12 at 6.30

pm. The theme then will be 'To teach, baptise and nurture new believers'.

The services provide people from all over the dioceses to engage with different aspects of the Five Marks of Mission through music, worship and prayer. Each service will bear the unique mark of the host community. Everyone is warmly invited to Come&C.

Condolences offered to the Archbishop of Wales

Condolences are being offered to the Archbishop of Wales and his family following the death of his wife.

Mrs Hilary Morgan died on Friday last at home. She had been suffering from cancer.

The Archbishop, Dr Barry Morgan, thanked those who had been praying for her and the family since her illness began. He said, "Hilary appreciated the care and concern you all showed and we were both upheld in a way I cannot describe by your prayers. She fought bravely over the last 20 months and never complained. She died without pain and at home as she and all of us wanted. All we can do now is release her into God's tender hands."

The Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, John Davies, said, “Throughout the Archbishop’s ministry, Hilary had been a source of wonderful support and help to him. Her loss will be keenly felt and I am sure the entire Church in Wales would wish to assure the Archbishop and his family of our love and prayers as they grieve privately.”

The funeral service for Mrs Morgan will take place on Friday, January 22 at 2pm at Llandaff Cathedral.

Catholics asked to thank God for the ‘insights’ of the Reformation

The Catholic and Lutheran Churches have issued a joint prayer thanking God for the “insights” received through the Reformation.

The service has been devised by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation in advance of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation next year.

The first jointly developed liturgical order is based on the report “From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017”.



Pope Francis is greeted during a meeting with members of the Lutheran World Federation at the Vatican

The Common Prayer, which can be adapted to suit local customs and preferences, is led by two presiders, one Catholic and one Lutheran, with two readers, again one Catholic and one Lutheran. Other ecumenical readers and leaders of intercessory prayer can take part in the service.

One prayer reads: “Thanks be to you O God for the many guiding theological and spiritual insights that we have all received through the Reformation. Thanks be to you for the good transformations and reforms that were set in motion by the Reformation or by struggling with

its challenges. Thanks be to you for the proclamation of the gospel that occurred during the Reformation and that since then has strengthened countless people to live lives of faith in Jesus Christ. Amen.”

The commemoration in 2017 brings joy and gratitude, the Common Prayer says, and must “also allow room for both Lutherans and Catholics to experience the pain over failures and trespasses, guilt and sin in the persons and events that are being remembered”.

The service has readings from the report *From Conflict to Communion*, including: “In the 16th century, Catholics and Lutherans frequently not only misunderstood but also exaggerated and caricatured their opponents in order to make them look ridiculous. They repeatedly violated the eighth commandment, which prohibits bearing false witness against one’s neighbour.”

One reading says: “Lutherans and Catholics often focused on what separated them from each other rather than looking for what united them. They accepted that the Gospel was mixed with the political and economic interests of those in power. Their failures resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. Families were torn apart, people imprisoned and tortured, wars fought and religion and faith misused. Human

beings suffered and the credibility of the Gospel was undermined with consequences that still impact us today. We deeply regret the evil things that Catholics and Lutherans have mutually done to each other.”

The service includes five commitments for Catholics and Lutherans together. “Catholics and Lutherans should always begin from the perspective of unity and not from the point of view of division in order to strengthen what is held in common even though the differences are more easily seen and experienced.” They “must let themselves continuously be transformed by the encounter with the other and by the mutual witness of faith” and should “commit themselves to seek visible unity, to elaborate together what this means in concrete steps, and to strive repeatedly toward this goal”. And they “should jointly rediscover the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ for our time” and “witness together to the mercy of God in proclamation and service to the world”.

Rorate Caeli, the traditionalist site, criticised the Common Prayer, saying it was the “first time that the drive for Catholic-Lutheran union and the glorification of the Reformation has taken a quasi-liturgical shape”.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

MPs' expenses: Sinn Fein claimed £500,000 for second homes

Daily Telegraph

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/mps-expenses/5301510/MPs-expenses-Sinn-Fein-claimed-500000-for-second-homes.html>

Diocese reacts to split rumours at Drumcree Church

Belfast Newsletter

Church of Ireland parishioners at Drumcree Parish Church in Portadown have claimed the situation is threatening to split the congregation.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/diocese-reacts-to-split-rumours-at-drumcree-church-1-7162412>

Church of Ireland cleric: Most Protestants would welcome Pope

Belfast Telegraph

Canon Ian Ellis, editor of The **Church of Ireland** Gazette, was responding to claims that there could be protests by extreme elements if that occurred.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/most-protestants-would-welcome-visit-by-pope-top-church-of-ireland-official-34368472.html>

Gay cake row appeal: Top human rights lawyer to join Ashers Bakery court

teamBelfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/gay-cake-row-appeal-top-human-rights-lawyer-to-join-ashers-bakery-court-team-34368942.html>

News Letter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/eminant-lawyer-joins-ashers-legal-team-1-7164062>

Role of Dr Raied Al-Wazzan role in McConnell case was reason to pause

News Letter

BenLowry, Deputy Editor writes...

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/ben-lowry-dr-al-wazzan-role-in-mcconnell-case-was-a-reason-to-pause-1-7160858>

Guardian - Report previewing the World Economic Forum which will take place in Davos next week. It mentions that the Archbishop of Canterbury will be among the delegates. The article says the invitation-only event will include a cast of politicians, digital pioneers, activists and Hollywood actors.

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/jan/13/dicaprio-world-economic-forum-davos-kerry-trudeau-lynch-archbishop-canterbury-uber>

Tel

Report on next week's World Economic Forum in Davos, which will be attended by the Archbishop of Canterbury along with other faith leaders.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/financetopics/davos/12103375/Davos-must-confront-a-world-at-a-tipping-point.html>

Wall Street Journal

Report that New York's state pension fund and the Church of England, both investors in [Exxon Mobil Corp](#), plan to file a shareholder resolution demanding that the U.S. oil company assess the impact on its business of climate change policy. Edward Mason, Head of Responsible Investment for the Church Commissioners is quoted.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/church-of-england-and-new-york-state-fund-to-press-exxon-on-climate-change-1452875338>

Tel

Columnist Simon Heffer says that heads must roll after the Bramall case as the police have become tools of the national hysteria about child abuse. Column includes comment on the handling of two Church of England related cases.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/12103384/Heads-must-roll-after-the-Bramall-blunders.html>

Exp/Ind

Further reports that Christian churches are in talks to look at a fixed date for Easter. Includes ref to comment

made on the issue by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Friday's Primates' press conference.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/635256/Archbishop-Justin-Welby-fixed-Easter-date-before-retirement-talks-with-Pope>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/a-millennium-on-churches-will-set-fixed-date-for-easter>

S Times

Report that on a YouGov poll, conducted last month found almost half (46%) have no religion, up from 42% in February 2015 and from 37% in January 2013. Articles notes the findings will be revealed on Tuesday by Linda Woodhead, professor in the sociology of religion at Lancaster University, when she delivers the British Academy lecture. She is quoted in the article.

http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/uk_news/Society/article1657457.ece

Ind on Sun

Comment on church attendance stats released this week. <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/church-attendances-are-in-decline-as-people-fill-the-void-with-outpourings-of-grief-a6816896.html>

Ind on Sun

Report that a High Court judge will review this week whether a heterosexual couple can enter a civil partnership. The couple, who say it is a basic equality issue, have the backing of former Conservative Children's Minister Tim Loughton, who has brought a Private Members bill.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/judge-to-rule-whether-heterosexual-couple-can-be-allowed-to-form-civil-partnership-a6816831.html>

Guard/Mail - Researchers at Oxford University say the introduction of same-sex marriage has not had the same impact as civil partnerships. The research concludes that most same-sex marriages involve couples already in civil partnerships, and 1 in 8 civil partnerships have been converted into marriage.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/jan/13/most-same-sex-marriages-england-wales-already-civil-partnerships>

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3398453/Civil-partnership-converted-marriage-rate-one-eight.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490

Christian Today - Article quoting Richard Dawkins as saying that Christianity may be the best defence against forms of religion that threaten the world.

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/richard.dawkins.says.christianity.is.worlds.best.defence.against.radical.islam/76416.htm>

Times - In an opinion piece, Edward Lucas asks whether the worst enemy of British Christians is themselves. He argues that much of the Christian church in Britain has lost its conviction, and therefore its power to convince.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/columnists/article4664724.ece>

Ind/Metro

Report that Labour MP Chris Bryant and former Anglican priest has quit the Church of England over its “homophobic” stance, following the Primates decision to temporarily remove the American Episcopal church from Anglican Communion decision-making bodies for supporting same sex marriage.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/bryant-quits-church-over-stance-on-gay-rights>

<http://metro.co.uk/2016/01/16/mp-and-former-vicar-quits-evil-church-of-england-over-gay-rights-5626558/>

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