

The essential brief on the Irish churches

DUP welcome for archbishop's stance against 'assisted suicide'

The DUP has backed the leader of the Church of Ireland after he challenged Lord Carey's support for the legalisation of 'assisted dying'.



News Letter -The party said the vast majority of people in Northern Ireland don't want the law change, though one campaigner yesterday countered that an opinion poll found people 3:1 in favour of legalisation.

In yesterday's News Letter the Primate of All Ireland, Archbishop of Armagh Richard Clarke, whose wife died from cancer, described the former Archbishop of Canterbury's arguments in favour of legalisation as "perplexing".

DUP peer Lord Morrow said last night that many people will be relieved that Archbishop Clarke has "spoken so clearly".

He added: "He is mindful, as are we all, of the sensitivities involved and that every case involves an individual and their family.

"There are huge problems with the proposals which have been put forward and already debated at Westminster, surpassed by the concerns about what future steps would be taken if any move towards assisted dying were introduced."

He added: “The vast majority of people in Northern Ireland believe in the value of human life and we should measure our society on how we treat the most vulnerable in it, not by installing criteria to judge when a life becomes worthless.”

A spokeswoman for the Northern Ireland Hospice said it is a member of umbrella organisation, Help The Hospices, which says it is “not aware of any hospice that currently supports a change in the law to legalise assisted dying in any form, or any that considers that a change in the law would be in the best interests of the people they care for”.

The organisation says recent years have seen “significant improvements in healthcare decision-making, which give people greater control over decisions about their treatment and care”.

Bert Rima, chair of the Northern Ireland branch of Dignity in Dying, said that the last Northern Ireland social attitudes survey found people 3:1 here in favour of assisted suicide.

“I do not recognise a moral distinction which Archbishop Clarke made in approving ‘medical non-intervention’ while opposing ‘direct intervention to end life’,” he said.

He supports Lord Falconer’s bill for assisted dying, noting it has safeguards which require the patient to be of sound mind, to have at most six months to live and to have requested to die on two separate occasions, satisfying two separate doctors.

Regarding fears of patients feeling pressured by relatives, he counters that relatives “almost always” urge their loved ones not to end their life.

Hospices in Oregon now back the measure 17 years after it was introduced there, he added.

I See the full text of Archbishop Clarke’s comments on assisted suicide at A spokeswoman for the Northern Ireland Hospice said it is a member of umbrella organisation, Help The Hospices, which says it is “not aware of any hospice that currently supports a change in the law to legalise assisted dying in any form, or any that considers that a change in the law would be in the best interests of the people they care for”.

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See further report on Archbishop Clarke’s comments on assisted suicide at

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/health/carey-is-wrong-on-assisted-dying-says-archbishop-1-6227072>

Full text of Archbishop Clarke’s comments at -

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/health/are-we-helping-to-die-or-helping-to-live-1-6228365>

'Fit for Purpose' Resource launched for Presbyterian churches

The Fit for Purpose theme for 2014/15 focuses on the Church as a people of service and outreach with each congregation seeking to identify the needs of the community where it is placed and encouraging its members to act as Christ’s representatives in the place where they live and work.

The All the difference in the world resource follows the format of previous years' materials comprising of six sessions, adaptable for use in Bible study



groups, midweek meetings or Sunday services.

Focusing on the letter of 1 Peter, the Bible study highlights a series of snapshots that build a biblical gallery of images that help us examine:

* Who we are - as the People of God

* What we're for - service and outreach in God's name

* What we are called to be a part of - bearers of the difference that God's redemption in Christ makes in the worlds into which He sends us to live for Him

Along with discussion questions and reflective prayers the Bible studies are supported by introductory DVD material from Rev. Frank Seller of Bloomfield Presbyterian Church, Belfast and an animation which presents each theme through an alternative visual medium. A range of snapshots drawn from around the Presbyterian Church in Ireland illustrate examples of what it means to be a people of service and outreach right here, right now in a variety of ways.



“Our hope and prayer is that this resource will equip you and your congregation to more fully discover, and joyfully live out, your place in God's people of service and outreach to Ireland and beyond,” said a spokesperson

The Bible study notes (price £1) and DVD (price £3.50) are now available to purchase online at: www.presbyterianireland.org/Resources/Congregational-Life-and-Administration/Bible-Study/All-the-Difference-in-the-World-People-of-Service?ID=6137

Ballywalter welcomes its new vicar

The parishioners of Ballywalter welcomed their new vicar, Revd Sue Bell, following her institution by Bishop Harold Miller on 8 August 2014. Bishop Harold also gave the address at the service in Holy Trinity Church, Ballywalter.

Revd Sue Bell was born in Tidworth, Wiltshire. Prior to her ordination as deacon in 2010 and priest in 2011, Sue spent 28 years as a Drama teacher in



a secondary school, rising to become head of department. Alongside that, she was an active member of her local Anglican church, St Thomas's, Lancaster.

Sue remained in the Diocese of Blackburn for her

curacy, serving in Longridge, near Preston before sensing a growing call to minister in Northern Ireland.

“It was something of a surprise to be called to Northern Ireland but it has become increasingly clear that this is where God wants us to be. I'm very much looking forward to meeting the people of Ballywalter and to partnering with them in the gospel. This Kingdom work is a joint venture!”

Sue has been married to Tony for 21 years and they have a 19 year old son, Alistair who will remain in England to pursue his studies.

Alongside cooking and hosting parties, the cinema and theatre going, Sue enjoys reading mystery books and has recently started photo-journaling country walks. Alistair has also been responsible for introducing her to some interesting popular music!

C of I events this week

Tomorrow (Sunday) at 4pm there will be a Summer Evening Service in Templeconnor church, Clonmacnoise. At 7pm the Archbishop of Armagh, Dr Richard Clarke, will preside at a service in St Mark's church, Armagh, to commemorate the outbreak of World War 1. During this service the names of members of the parish who gave their lives in the Great War will be read aloud and a short time of remembrance will be observed. The preacher will be Revd Barry Paine, Rector of Ballinderry, Tamlaght and Ardboe and musical accompaniment will be provided by the Killylea Silver Band. Following the

service refreshments will be served in the Crozier Hall where there will be an exhibition of photographs and memorabilia from the World War 1 era.

The final recital in the St Barrahanes Church Festival of Music will be held in Castletownshend on Thursday evening when Frederico Marincola will present a programme of Italian songs from 1575 to 1936 accompanied on the guitar.

On Friday, Summer Music in Sandford continues at lunchtime with a classical guitar concert by Damien Kelly in Sandford parish church, Ranelagh. *C of I notes, Irish Times*

Anglican Vicar of Baghdad: “Child I baptised cut in half by ISIS”

The five-year-old son of a founding member of Baghdad’s Anglican church was cut in half during an attack by the Islamic State¹ on the Christian town of Qaraqosh.

In an interview yesterday August 8, an emotional Canon Andrew White told ACNS that he christened the boy several years ago, and that the child’s parents had named the lad Andrew after him.

“I’m almost in tears because I’ve just had somebody in my room whose little child was cut in half,” he said. “I baptised his child in my church in Baghdad². This little boy, they named him after me – he was called Andrew.”

The fact that Andrew’s brother was named George after St George’s Anglican Church in Iraq’s capital demonstrates the strong ties the family had to the church there. The boy’s father had been a founder member of the church back in 1998 when the Canon had first come to Baghdad. Canon White added, “This man, before he retired north to join his family was the caretaker of the Anglican church.”

Though the move north should have proved safer for the Iraqi Christian family, the Islamic State made sure that it became a place of terror. “This town of Qaraqosh is a Christian village so they knew everybody there was part of their target group,” said Canon White. “They [the Islamic State] attacked the whole of the town. They bombed it, they shot at people.”

The Islamic State group captured Qaraqosh overnight Wednesday/Thursday after the withdrawal of Kurdish forces. The boy’s family, along with many other townspeople, have now fled to Irbil. However, news reports suggest this may be the Islamic State’s next destination.

Anglicans at the forefront of relief

The violent takeover of parts of Iraq by the Islamic State is threatening to bring about what the UN has said would be a “humanitarian catastrophe” in the beleaguered nation.



Canon Andrew White (left) in the church where he had christened the boy.

Canon Andrew

White said that Anglicans there have been working hard to provide a lot of support for the Christians who have fled Mosul and Nineveh to the north, as well as the many other minority groups targeted by the Islamic State.

“Anglicans are literally at the forefront of bringing help in this situation and there’s no-one else,” he said adding that the church is supplying much-needed food, water, accommodation and other relief items thanks to financial contributions from supporters overseas. The church's activities are led by a Muslim, Dr Sarah Ahmed.

“We need two things: prayer and money. With those two we can do something. Without those we can do nothing.”

Those wanting to donate can do so at <http://frrme.org/>. As regards prayer, Canon White said, “I have three ‘P’s that I always mention which is for Protection, Provision and Perseverance. We need protection, we need to provide for those people and we need to keep going.” It’s clear from social media posts on Facebook and Twitter that members of the Anglican Communion right across the world are praying for this situation. Many have also indicated their support for persecuted Christians in Iraq by changing their social media avatars to the Arabic symbol for ‘N’ denoting Nazarene which ISIS has been using to identify Christian homes.

Leaders speak out In recent days, Anglican leaders from countries including Egypt, Wales, Brazil and South Africa have all expressed their dismay at the situation unfolding in Iraq.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, issued the following statement today on the situation in Iraq, shortly before he travelled from the Philippines to Papua New Guinea.

“The horrific events in Iraq rightly call our attention and sorrow yet again. Christians and other religious minorities are being killed and face terrible suffering.

“What we are seeing in Iraq violates brutally people’s right to freedom of religion and belief, as set out under Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is extremely important that aid efforts are supported and that those who have been displaced are able to find safety. I believe that, like France, the United Kingdom’s doors should be open to refugees, as they have been throughout history.

“The international community must document human rights abuses being committed in northern Iraq so that future prosecutions can take place. It is important and necessary for the international community to challenge the culture of impunity which has allowed these atrocities to take place.

“With the world’s attention on the plight of those in Iraq, we must not forget that this is part of an evil pattern around the world where Christians and other minorities are being killed and persecuted for their faith. Only this week I received an email from a friend in Northern Nigeria about an appalling attack on a village, where Christians were killed because of their faith in Jesus Christ. Such horrific stories have become depressingly familiar in countries around the world, including Syria, South Sudan and the Central African Republic.

“We must continue to cry to God for peace and justice and security throughout the world. Those suffering such appalling treatment in Iraq are especially in my prayers at this time.”

Other Christian leaders have also spoken up about the situation in Iraq including Roman Catholics, who, in England and Wales, have designated Sunday, 9 August, as a Day of Prayer for Christians in Iraq. The Syrian Orthodox Patriarch yesterday wrote to the UN, following an emergency meeting of Patriarchs, calling on the UN Security Council to “fulfil their responsibilities in stopping this genocide”.

Notes

1. The brutal, extremist group, which claims to have fighters from across the world, announced the creation of a "caliphate" - an Islamic state - across its

claimed territory in Iraq and Syria a month ago. Learn more at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-28116033>
 2. Baghdad is part of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf <http://www.cypgulf.org> which is part of The Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East, a Member Church of the Anglican Communion. [Learn more here](#)

Press Review

Third Sector

Article on how the link between faith and charity was once taken for granted, but the ground has shifted in recent years. Peter Stanford states more questions are being asked about the role and responsibilities of religious bodies. The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, is interviewed, saying that the 'instinctive link' between religion and charity is, he fears, under strain as never before. He said: "There is a lack of any sort of absolute assumption that religion is something good. Too many people today instead see it as bound up in conflict, in politics and in struggle."

<http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/faith-good-works-weakening-traditional-links/governance/article/1304404>

Times

Report that the leader of Iraq's Anglican community, Canon Andrew White, last night called on the British government to offer refuge to some of the thousands of Christians fleeing Islamist militants who have committed atrocities against them. "The Christian community has few places to go. They have sadly got to get out of Iraq," said Andrew White, who spent yesterday among Christian refugees sheltering near Irbil after fleeing to Kurdish territory. "Britain must offer refuge to these people." He said that the atrocities being committed against Iraq's minority communities seemed barely credible to some people because they were so extreme.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/middleeast/iraq/article4169969.ece>

BBC/Tel/Guard/FT/Huff Post/Mail

Reports that tens of thousands of Iraq's Yazidi religious minority have fled to the highlands to escape the wrath of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. They state an unspeakable humanitarian crisis is unfolding. Some reports say Pope Francis has called on the international community to protect Iraq's Christian community.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-magazine-monitor-28686607>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iraq/11019510/Is-this-the-end-for-the-Yazidis-of-Iraq.html>

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/07/who-yazidi-isis-iraq-religion-ethnicity-mountains>

<http://video.ft.com/3719336214001/Yazidi-minority-flee-Isis-wrath-in-Iraq/World>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iraq/11018298/Islamic-State-pulls-down-church-crosses-in-northern-Iraq-as-200000-flee.html>

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/08/07/yazidis-face-death-on-iraqi-mountain-or-slaughter-at-the-hands-of-the-islamic-state_n_5658270.html?utm_hp_ref=uk&ir=UK

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2718918/Thousands-Christians-flee-Islamic-militants-pulling-church-crosses-Iraq-biggest-town-overrun-ISIS.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-2718901/Pope-urges-protection-Iraqi-Christians.html>

BBC/Times/Tel

Reports that US President Barack Obama says he has authorised air strikes against Islamic militants in northern Iraq, if they threaten US interests or to prevent the slaughter of religious minorities. However, the president said US troops would not be sent back to Iraq. They state the Chaldean archbishop of Kirkuk, Joseph Thomas, described the situation as "catastrophic, a crisis beyond imagination". He demanded urgent intervention to save what remained of the area's Christian heritage.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28699832>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/middleeast/article4170383.ece>

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/08/obama-authorises-iraq-air-strikes-against-isis>

Times

Leader article stating the West should act now to prevent genocide in northern Iraq. It says the jihadists are brutal but not as strong as they pretend and that if they are cut down now, the region, and the world, will be an immeasurably better place.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/leaders/article4169789.ece>

Express

Report that the body of King Richard III will be reburied at Leicester Cathedral next March. The reinterment service will take place after a week of events in Leicestershire to honour the monarch. It states the reinterment service will be broadcast live on Channel 4. The Bishop of Leicester, Tim Stevens is quoted saying: "Our cathedral has been consistently committed to providing a fitting,

dignified and memorable ceremony for the reinterment of King Richard. We can now see how this works out in detail and our city and county look forward to all the events of next spring."

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/royal/496639/King-Richard-III-will-get-a-state-funeral-at-Leicester-Cathedral-next-month>

Mail

Report that the granddaughter of a First World War hero, Private Walter Perry, called for church officials to remove a shed which was built over his grave at St Mary's Church in Bletchley. It states Ann Dallas, 72, has been visiting his grave since she was a child and the headstone now sits less than 4ft away from the shed wall, which also covers Pte Perry's grandparents' graves. Milton Keynes Council maintains the cemetery but the Diocese of Oxford is still responsible for the shed. A spokesman for the Bishop of Buckingham, Alan Wilson, said he has contacted Mrs Dallas about Pte Perry's grave. The Bishop said: 'We are saddened by the distress that has been caused to this family and the parish priest has offered to meet Mrs Dallas to discuss her concerns and find the right way forward.'

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2719265/Furious-granddaughter-First-World-War-hero-plea-church-officials-remove-shed-built-GRAVE.html#ixzz39m3CXZLY>

Guard

Report that pregnant women in Ireland could be blocked from having an abortion even if they are at risk of suicide after conceiving as a result of rape or incest, under new guidelines issued to Irish doctors.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/07/pregnant-women-ireland-abortion-ban-suicide>

BBC

Report that China says it may try to create a theology based on Christianity - that integrates the religion with Chinese culture and is compatible with the country's socialist beliefs. Wang Zuonan, a senior official for religious affairs, says China supports the development of Christianity within the country. But "the construction of Chinese Christian theology should adapt to China's national condition," the state-backed China Daily website reports. His comments came at a conference for Sinicization of Christianity in Shanghai.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-28687520>

Obituary

Tel

Obituary report on a leading British organ builder, Ken Tickell, who died aged 57. It states his instruments can be found in Eton College, Worcester Cathedral, and at Keble College, Oxford, where the pipes were painted to match the chapel's spectacular colouring. Tickell was a founding member of the Institute of British Organ Building and for a number of years he was organist at St Mary's Church, Northampton.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/11019037/Ken-Tickell-obituary.html>

Blogs

Archbishop Cranmer: "We are being butchered under the banner of 'There is no God but Allah'"

<http://archbishop-cranmer.blogspot.co.uk/2014/08/we-are-being-butchered-under-banner-of.html>

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