



The DUP are not extremists. Here's 7 things you need to know about them

The Northern Ireland director of the Evangelical Alliance, Peter Lynas explains what the DUP stand for in Premier Christianity magazine.

There has been a lot of irresponsible and uniformed comment about the DUP since talk of a deal began.

My work involves meeting with all the parties here in Northern Ireland while remaining

politically neutral. I am not a member of any political party.

For five years I worked as a barrister representing those I agreed with and those I didn't. That objectivity can be helpful when it comes to looking at some of the facts surrounding one of the many parties we work with, who now find themselves at the heart of government. So here are seven things worth knowing about the DUP:

1. They are neither left nor right. They are often seen as right of centre because of their views on security and social issues. However, many of their voters are working class and they opposed aspects of the Conservative manifesto including welfare cuts while supporting the triple lock on pensions and the winter fuel allowance.

2. They favour a soft Brexit. The DUP have been strong supporters of Brexit, but Arlene Foster wrote a letter with the late Martin McGuinness calling for flexibility on the Irish border, ease of trade with EU member states and access to both skilled and unskilled labour. Northern Ireland has the only UK land border with Europe, and wants to maintain strong relationships with Ireland.

3. They understand the difference between extremism and terrorism. Many people in Northern Ireland are being labelled as extremists for having socially conservative views on marriage and the beginning and end of life. However, those same people, including members of the DUP have had personal experience of terrorism. The loose use of 'extremism' for political point scoring will ultimately undermine attempts to legislate against terrorism.

4. The redefinition of marriage is a devolved issue. Ruth Davidson, who leads the Conservatives in Scotland, wants to protect LGBT rights in Great Britain and campaign for change in Northern Ireland. However, she also wants to stop the DUP from protecting marriage in Northern Ireland while campaigning for change in the rest of the UK, which hardly seems fair. The matter is devolved, meaning it is for the Northern Ireland Assembly to decide whether to redefine marriage and the DUP do not appear to have raised it in the negotiations. It is worth remembering that about 160 countries in the world hold to a traditional understanding of marriage, with only a handful changing. Northern Ireland is with the majority.

5. The DUP are pro-women and pro-children.

When it comes to abortion, the DUP, like most politicians in Northern Ireland, are pro-life. Their policy is that both lives matter and this is reflected in Northern Ireland's laws which balance the life of the mother and the unborn child. There is no appetite to see the 1967 Act introduced in Northern Ireland and like marriage it is a devolved matter.

6. They are experienced negotiators. The DUP have been involved in a lot of peace talks. They have already caught the Conservatives out once, when the Tories announced an early deal. They are unlikely to enter a formal coalition and have been clear they will try to extract as much as possible for the people of Northern Ireland from any deal.

7. They have experience sharing power. The DUP and have been involved in a mandatory coalition with Sinn Féin for over ten years, so they are used to working with people they strongly disagree with. However, there are concerns that any deal with the Conservatives could delay or undermine the restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

A Premier explainer on the DUP

The Democratic Unionist Party (The DUP) is a unionist political party in Northern Ireland, which was founded by Ian Paisley in 1971.

They are ‘socially conservative’. They are anti-abortion and demonstrated their opposition against same-sex marriage in their campaign against the legislation of homosexual acts in Northern Ireland.

The party leader, Arlene Foster, is a devout Christian. A reporter once described how she “lives her Christian principles every day of the week.” Despite controversy around the traditional values held by the DUP, Mrs. Foster states that their Christian values will not change.

The DUP are pro-Brexit but its manifesto argues for maintaining a ‘seamless and frictionless’ border with Ireland.

They list their main priorities as:

Creating more jobs, prioritising spending on the health service, investing in infrastructures for the future, protecting family budgets and raising standards in education for all.

There will be increased scrutiny of the DUP over the coming days and no doubt old quotes and difficult stories will surface. Questions should

rightly be asked of those who seek political office and want to be in government. However, the reporting and coverage must be fair. When Ruth Davidson said she put LGBTI rights above her party, no-one challenged her on it. Compare that to [the treatment of Tim Farron being grilled over his faith](#) or the unchallenged comments in the media about the DUP.

This election has shown us how divided our society is on multiple levels. Now is the moment to take seriously the biblical command to pray for those in authority.

A good friend of mine talks about honour in this way, "When you honour someone, you say their name differently - their name is safe in your mouth." How safe are the names of our politicians?

Peter Lynas is the [Northern Ireland director of the Evangelical Alliance](#)

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Methodist Church Conference begins tomorrow

The annual conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland begins tomorrow at Trinity Methodist Church Lisburn. The programme of the conference is available at - http://www.irishmethodist.org/sites/default/files/Bluebook%20repression%20for%20email%20distribution_0.pdf

Saint Patrick's three-day ecumenical youth programme

From 19–21 June, 2017, Saint Patrick's Cathedral will host "Cherished Equally: An Ecumenical Exploration of Identity, Stereotyping, and Reconciliation."

The programme, a joint initiative between Saint Patrick's Cathedral and the Department of Foreign Affairs, will bring youth aged 15–18 from across the island of Ireland to participate in workshops and social activities. Highlights include a sports event facilitated by Ken McCue from Sports Against Racism Ireland involving a

local Community Garda Team and a traditional music workshop at the Cobblestone, Smithfield.

Participants in “Cherished Equally” reflect a diverse range of national identities, including half from Northern Ireland, a quarter from Dublin 8, and a quarter international youth currently living in Direct Provision. They have been invited on the basis of their involvement in youth programmes and on the potential for them to become youth ambassadors.

Speaking about the programme, Kelley Bermingham, Community Officer, said, “The age group that ‘Cherished Equally’ targets, 15–18, is often excluded from formal conversations about national and religious identity. This is an opportunity for their voices to be heard while they also develop leadership skills.”

Cherished Equally is part of Saint Patrick’s Cathedral’s community engagement initiatives, including regional outreach to rural parishes, strategic support of not-for-profits in the greater Dublin area, and strategies to improve the quality of life for people living in its environs.

For further information, please contact Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, Saint Patrick’s Close, Dublin 8

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Reformation 500

The Church of Ireland Historical Society and the Catholic Historical Society of Ireland have organised a two-day conference to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. A panel of top-ranking historians will bring participants up to date on current academic thinking on a series of historical events that have profoundly shaped the history of western Europe, and far beyond European shores. They will also address significant legacy issues. Among the speakers will be Professor Alec Ryrie (Durham University) and Professor Peter Marshall (Warwick University) both of whom have recently published major works on the Reformation.

The first day (Friday 20 October) takes place in the Music Room of Christ Church cathedral and the second day (Saturday 21 October) will be held in St Patrick's Campus, Drumcondra (Dublin City University). A full programme is available on the Church of Ireland Historical Society website.

On the Friday evening there will be the launch of The Church of Ireland and its past: history,

interpretation and identity, edited by Mark Empey, Alan Ford and Miriam Moffitt and published by Four Courts Press. This, it is believed, will be a timely contribution to understanding the past, as it has been perceived over the course of those post-Reformation years.

Registration is via Eventbrite (https://reformation_500.eventbrite.ie). Numbers are limited due to health and safety specifications and so those wishing to attend must register. The conference is free of charge.

Search examines ‘Reform’ issues in summer issue

Thoughts from Bishop John McDowell and Bishop Kenneth Kearon on “Reform in Today’s Church” feature in the special issue of *Search*, out this week, along with papers by a wide variety of theologians and church historians.

The issue contains all the papers presented at the Spring Colloquium “Ecclesia Semper Reformanda” (the reformed Church, always in need of reform) organised to mark 500 years of Reformation thinking in the western church.

Search

The “Protestant principle” that affirms the inadequacy of all human structures in the face of God was a leading theme introduced by Professor Wener Jeanrond, Master of St Benet’s Hall, in Oxford. The theme was referred to throughout the day as participants reflected on what Reformation thinking has to teach us today, as well as the dangers of absolutising the theological concepts and structures of the past. Prof Alan Ford and Revd Dr Maurice Elliott looked at issues largely concerning the Church of Ireland in morning session, followed in the afternoon by Bishop Kearon and Professor Linda Hogan on more global concerns – governance, prayer, unity and diversity in today’s world. Respondents Kate Turner and Dr Elmhin Walsh prompted discussion after each of their talks.

This issue also contains reviews by – to name a few – Archbishop Richard Clarke, Houston McKelvey, Raymond Gillespie and Michael Kennedy of volumes on subjects ranging from 1916 and Word War One, through parish histories to theodicy, liturgy and catechetics.

Diocesan evangelists to be commissioned

On Friday, June 16 the Bishop of Down & Dromore, Rt Rev Harold Miller, will be commissioning five new Diocesan Evangelists in Mount Merrion Church. The service starts at 7.30pm and everyone is welcome to attend.

The course – taken over a two-year period – involved distance learning, monthly meetings for study and worship and six weekends featuring specific themes in evangelism.

Opportunities for practical work – preaching, street outreach and door-to-door evangelism – were provided.

The students undertook a six-module accredited – through St. John's, Nottingham – course which also included an exciting 'Life of the Evangelist' core unit. That is skills-based and built up through an evangelism placement, usually in their home church.

It takes a lot of hard work and commitment to complete this course and the passion and faith these evangelists have demonstrated in undertaking it is very encouraging for the wider church.

The next course will begin in January 2018. For more information on that, contact Andrew Brannigan on 07950 846621 or at andrew@downanddromore.org

Rathmines rector retires after 35 years service in parish

Parishioners of Rathmines with Harold's Cross filled Holy Trinity Church on Trinity Sunday (June 11) to bid a fond farewell to their Rector of 35 years. Canon Neil McEndoo led his final service as Rector and Holy Trinity's traditional congregation and its fresh expressions congregation were joined by Archbishop Michael Jackson for the occasion which also marked the 189th anniversary of the consecration of the church. Also assisting was the Vicar, the Revd Rob Jones and lay reader, Edward Lewis.



The Revd Rob Jones, Archbishop Michael Jackson, Canon Neil McEndoo and Edward Lewis.

In his final sermon, Canon McEndoo looked back over his wide ranging ministry in the parish and thanked everyone who had supported and encouraged him since his arrival in Harold's Cross just over 35 years ago and Rathmines over 32 years ago.

Detailing the voyage they had been on together, the Rector spoke of the history of the parish, the closure of the church in Harold's Cross in 2001 and its sale to the Russian Orthodox Church and the uniting of the two parishes and he paid tribute to the parishioners who took and

supported the decision. He highlighted the repairs and redevelopment of Holy Trinity Church to become a multi purpose parish centre in 1990 and said that the work carried out then is still attracting attention today.

Canon McEndoo said he was leaving the parish with very mixed feelings and in the hope that he had served the parish to the best of his ability and with the help, guidance and assistance of many faithful people.

A special lunch followed the service and was organised by church warden, Isobel Henderson. Speaking after lunch, Archbishop Jackson thanked Canon McEndoo for a long and faithful ministry during which he had presided over change and transformation in both Harold's Cross and Rathmines Parishes. He applauded his capacity to enable people to see change as a pathway from the present to the future and also his ability to maintain the regularity of parish life and ministry. He spoke warmly of the spiritual energy he put into the Hospice in Harold's Cross and for his patient ministry there over many years. He concluded by wishing his all that is best for the months and years ahead.

[You can read Canon McEndoo's farewell sermon here.](#)

Bishop's tribute to the Revd Liz McElhinney

The funeral service for the Revd Liz McElhinney will be held on Saturday, June 17 at 10.30am in Shankill Parish Church.

Paying tribute to her, Bishop Harold Miller of Down & Dromore, said: "It is so hard to believe that the vibrant and loving Liz McElhinney has gone.

"She died of Motor Neurone Disease, and gave a wonderful testimony of faith in the YouTube clip on this website.

"I had the privilege of sharing in Holy Communion with her last week to give thanks for the 20th anniversary of her ordination. It was a holy moment."

Liz was a curate in Magheralin from 1997 until 2001 before continuing her ministry in Calry in the diocese of Kilmore Elphin and Ardagh.

She returned to the diocese of Down & Dromore in retirement in 2007, taking on the role of pastoral support for the clergy of Down & Dromore and their spouses until 2012.

She then served in parochial ministry in Roscommon, diocese of Kilmore Elphin and Ardagh from 2013 to 2015.

News briefs

+++ Armagh institutions - On Thursday 1st June 2017 at Loughgilly Parish Church, the Revd Graham Spence was instituted as Rector of the parishes of Acton, Drumbanagher and Loughgilly by Archbishop Richard Clarke . The preacher at the service was Canon Shane Forster.

On Thursday 8th June 2017 at Richhill Parish Church, the Revd Gary McMurray was instituted as Rector of the Parish by Archbishop Richard Clarke. The Preacher was the Revd Trevor Johnston (fourth left).

+++ Swift in Dunlavin - Dunlavin Arts Festival will present 'Swift in Dunlavin', an evening of poetry, prose, song and organ on Saturday 17th. June at 8pm. to celebrate the bicentenary of St. Nicholas Church, Dunlavin, and the 350th anniversary of the birth of Jonathan Swift. Booking is through eventbrite.ie

Salvation Army calls on Government to help people thrive

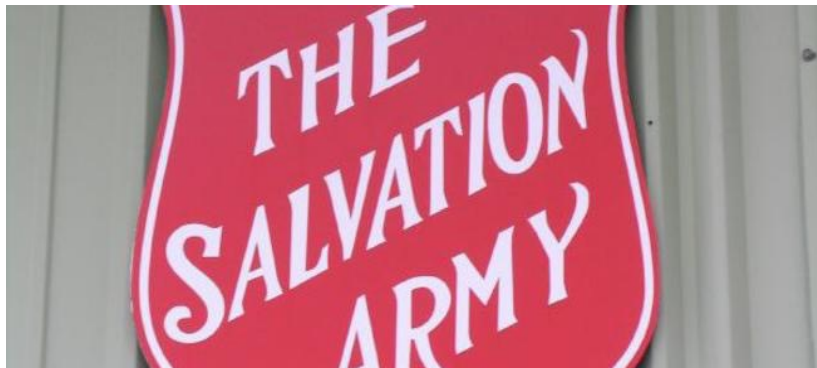
The Salvation Army is looking forward to working with the new UK government to transform the lives of the country's most vulnerable and marginalized.

In a statement released this week, the church and charity is calling on Theresa May's new government to do what it can to provide effective support so all the population will thrive.

Following the result of a hung Parliament in June's General Election, the Conservative party are drawing on support from Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party in order to form a majority in the House Of Commons.

Whatever form it takes, the Salvation Army is asking the government to focus on three main priorities of housing, older social care and employment support for those who are unable to access mainstream services.

The statement read: "As a leading Church and charity in the UK and Republic of Ireland, during the election we called on the political parties in the UK to ensure a new government would



provide effective support for the most vulnerable people in our communities, so that everyone in the UK is able to thrive."

It goes on to say that : "These requests to the new government remain essential to ensure our communities across the UK flourish."

The issue of social care caused controversy during recent election campaigning, as many accused the Conservatives of making a U-turn when they announced that they would introduce a cap on the amount someone would have to pay on their care, having previously ruled it out.

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