



Pro-gay marriage bishop slams pastor's stance

The first bishop to openly back same-sex civil marriage has described as “reprehensible” the comments of a pastor who said homosexuality is a sexual sin, like rape and adultery.

Irish Examiner - The Right Rev Dr Paul Colton, the Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork, Cloyne, and Ross, said he read Baptist pastor Craig Ledbetter’s remarks with “disbelief”.

“It is reprehensible, and is certainly not representative of either the God or Christianity I believe in,” Bishop Colton said.

Mr Ledbetter, head of the Bible Baptist Church of Ballincollig, Co Cork, sparked outrage when he rowed into the referendum debate.

“Homosexuality is a sexual sin, just like rape, just like adultery,” he said.

“If a rapist demanded his crimes to be recognised legally, we as a society wouldn’t allow it.

“When [same-sex marriage] is available elsewhere, you can’t force every religious group to provide it.

“We used to live in a free society. Of all people, liberals demand diversity. Now, they demand conformity. It’s wrong.”

Mr Ledbetter said he has received a flood of threatening phone calls and emails but said he stands over his comments.

“I did not want this to be seen as an attack on people,” he said. “I never wanted to offend or hurt anybody. I care about people. I don’t condemn them or judge them.

“But you can’t be afraid to say that something is wrong. Homosexual sex is out of the bounds of God’s design for man and woman.”

However, Bishop Colton, who last year spoke out publicly in support of civil same-sex marriage, strongly criticised the pastor’s comments.

“Such language of sin and crime about homosexuality stems, it seems to me, from an uncritical and literalist approach to the Bible which, for the modern person, would make it impossible for most people to believe at all,” said Bishop Colton.

“I have no doubt that most reasonable people, not only gay and lesbian people, will be outraged by what has been said. I think they’ve every right to be.”

Last year, Bishop Colton told those at the launch of Cork’s LGBT awareness week that, whatever about his own personal views, it was undeniable that he is part of a religion and institution that has caused deep hurt and damage to gay people over the centuries.

He said if the referendum passes in May, it will simply enable the State to make provision for the

marriage of people of the same gender within the State's own framework.

“Churches, such as the Church of Ireland, will continue to have their internal regulation,” he said.

“The time may, however, come — and personally I hope it does — when the Church of Ireland will review this discipline, in the same way that some of our sister churches have done.”

Mr Ledbetter, who has lived in Ireland for over 20 years, also criticised what he said was a lack of balance in the referendum debate, and said he will be voting no.

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/pro-gay-marriage-bishop-slams-pastors-stance-324913.html>

Shot missionary Maud Kells flown to safety by Royal Black charity

When the Royal Black Institution set out to fundraise for an overseas charity, it never dreamed it would be helping someone so close to home.

News Letter - The institution has now finished its latest fundraising drive, with £85,000 collected



Millar Farr and Maud Kells at the handover of charity cash

for two charities – one of them being Aviation Mission Fellowship (MAF), which flew wounded Cookstown missionary Maud Kells for medical treatment after she was shot earlier this year.

The other charity was the Bible Society in Northern Ireland, with the two organisations chosen because they could combine their expertise and use aircraft to deliver specially-translated Bibles to remote parts of southern Sudan.

The cash was handed over late last month at the institution's Lurgan headquarters to be split between the charities.

Present at the handover was Maud herself.

In an uncanny twist, Royal Black Sovereign Grand Master Millar Farr is a member of the same church as her (Molesworth Presbyterian in Cookstown), and he described the fact they had ended up supporting a charity which aided in her rescue as "providential".

Asked if he ever could have imagined such a thing may happen, he said: "No. It's just one of those coincidences."

A devout Christian, Maud had been based at a medical centre in the village of Mulita in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and had sometimes used MAF planes (which also carry food and medical supplies) for transport.

She was shot by bandits in the tiny remote settlement on January 4.

"But for MAF flying her out for medical treatment, she might not have survived," said Mr Farr.

The fundraising activities for the Bible Society and MAF are part of an ongoing scheme.

On every even year since 2002 the institution has chosen designated charities to funnel funds towards.

These have in the past included a hospital in Kiwoko, Uganda, which consequently has units named after dead Royal Black members Lord Molyneaux and Sir Norman Stronge.

That year was the best they had seen so far, with more that £100,000 raised.

When it comes to this year's charity takings, Mr Farr said: "Bearing in mind the economic climate coming through in the past number of years, we are more than pleased."

This latest tally of cash brings the total they have raised through these bi-annual drives to just under £600,000.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/shot-missionary-maud-kells-flown-to-safety-by-royal-black-charity-1-6697951>

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The pain of Drumcree - Archbishop Eames to speak on healing in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

Archbishop Robin Eames will speak at the Monday evening healing service in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast on 11 May at 8pm.

He will address the theme 'My Path of Healing'. There is no one better qualified to speak on the subject because the Archbishop served as a church leader on this island for almost 30 years during the Troubles and the years of tension that followed. He conducted the funerals of many people who were killed in the violence.

However, possibly his biggest test was the tension surrounding Drumcree in the late nineties. About that time he said "The pressure and tension surrounding Drumcree was greater than I ever felt in any single episode of my life. All the suffering of the Troubles, and the Drumcree situation – all of that will never leave me. I was born here, I have loved this place, I have been loved in this place, I will die in this place and I will take all the pain and suffering of this place with me to the grave!"

How did the Archbishop remain strong in the midst of all this pressure? Come and hear him speak on 'My Path of Healing' on Monday, 11 May.

Personal prayer for healing will be available at this service, as will a blessing with oil.

Worship will be led by West Church, Bangor Music Group.

Day of Prayer for the Renewal and Revival of Faith

Divine Healing Ministries is holding a Day of Prayer for the Renewal and Revival of Faith in this Land on Saturday June 20.

This will take place in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, from 10.30am – 3.30pm and the theme for the day is 'Healing through Forgiveness.'

Various Speakers from different denominations will lead at half hourly intervals.

Divine Healing Ministries invite you to commit to come for five hours of prayer, or even for a half hour if unable to commit for longer.

Refreshments will be available.

If you are planning to attend, please send name, address and email to divinehealing@live.co.uk or phone 028 9031 1532.

Wicklow Clergy appointment

Archbishop Michael Jackson has appointed the Revd Jack Kinhead as Bishop's Curate to serve as Priest in Charge of Wicklow and Killiskey. He will take up the position in July and the Archbishop will preside at a service of introduction in Wicklow Parish Church on Friday July 10.

Jack is currently Curate Assistant in Taney Parish (Dublin) and Chancellor's Vicar in St Patrick's Cathedral. Originally from Lisburn, County Antrim, Jack moved to Dublin in 2002 to read a degree in History at Trinity College. Having graduated, he spent some time working in St Patrick's Cathedral, where he was also a Lay Vicar Choral, before entering the Church of Ireland Theological College (now Institute). Jack was ordained deacon in June 2010 and served as Curate in the Parish of Cregagh, in Belfast (Down and Dromore). He became Curate Assistant in Taney in 2013.

Jack is married to Rachael who comes from Carlow, is a graduate of Trinity College, and is

currently in the final stages of postgraduate study in Marino Institute of Education, to be a Primary School teacher.

In his spare time, Jack is a keen singer, golfer, and hill walker.

Jack takes up the position following the retirement of Canon John Clarke. The Revd Ken Rue will continue in his position as Associate Vicar of Wicklow and Killiskey where he will minister to the parish of Killiskey allowing the Priest in Charge to concentrate his ministry on Wicklow Parish while having overall charge and providing cover for Killiskey.

Archbishop passes on victim letters to Egyptian Christians

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby has personally handed over letters of condolence from the families of British terror victims to the leader of the largest Christian minority in the Middle East.

Belfast Telegraph -The gesture, believed to include letters from the family of murdered British aid worker David Haines, was made to Bishop Tawadros, the Pope of Egypt's Coptic



The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby has called for more support for Christians facing persecution

Christians, as the archbishop made a whirlwind visit to Egypt.

The two-day trip, described as a "visit of condolence", follows the murders of 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians in Libya. The migrant workers were kidnapped and beheaded by Islamic State (IS) militants in February.

The archbishop, who has called for more support for Christians facing persecution, took the personal messages after a grieving British relative "came to see him a few weeks ago and

asked him to take these letters with him", according to his spokesman.

The spokesman said: "He personally took 21 letters with him and has handed them over.

"The essence of the visit is to show solidarity following the murder of the Coptic Christians. It is also reminding people of what has happened. The people he has met so far have been genuinely delighted that he has made this very brief visit here to pledge his support and stand by them."

The archbishop has previously condemned the beheading of Mr Haines by IS militants in September as a "brutal, cruel murder" and an "act of absolute evil". He called on churches to pray for the family.

Mr Haines, a 44-year-old aid worker, was seized in Syria in 2013. He was being held by Islamic State militants who have killed other international captives including journalists.

There was also a chilling reminder during the visit of IS's bloody activities as the militants released a video appearing to show the killing of two groups of captured Ethiopian Christians in Libya. - More at :

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/archbishop-passes-on-victim-letters-31154206.html>



Happy with their lot: newly ordained priests in Bristol in 2014

Alister McGrath criticises Resourcing Ministerial Education

The *Church Times* has published an article by Alister McGrath which is headlined [It's the theology, stupid](#). The strapline is clearer about the content of the article: *What do we want from our clergy*.

His view is clear:

...To be asked to minister without an informing vision of God (which is what theology is really all about), however, is like being told to make bricks without straw. What keeps people going in ministry, and what, in my experience, congregations are longing for, is an exciting and empowering vision of God, articulated in a theology that is integrated with worship, prayer, and social action.

Ministry has both vertical and horizontal dimensions, standing at the intersection of God and the world. Both those dimensions need to be sustained. RME's exclusively pragmatic approach to ministerial training risks the loss of its core motivation and inspiration for Christian ministry.

This hostility towards theological scholarship seems to reflect a lack of understanding of what theology is, and why it matters.

The training that we offer our ministers must do far more than simply acquaint them with the institutional ethos of the Church of England. It must energise them through engagement with the realities of the Christian gospel...

<http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2015/17-april/comment/opinion/it-s-the-theology-stupid>

Media digest

News Letter

SF Easter Rising claims a cynical lie: Fianna Fail

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/sf-easter-rising-claims-a-cynical-lie-fianna-fail-1-6698073>

Irish Independent

Why are we still listening to the 1916 Secret Seven? - Ruth Dudley-Edwards

<http://www.independent.ie/opinion/columnists/ruth-dudley-edwards/why-are-we-still-listening-to-the-1916-secret-seven-31153770.html>

Belfast Telegraph

Defamation Act must be extended to end Northern Ireland's embarrassment

It was only a matter of time before Northern Ireland's antiquated libel laws ran up against the fairer system that ordains in England and Wales. And now it has happened...

It's time to extend the Defamation Act 2013 across the Irish Sea and end an embarrassing anachronism that serves a few vested interests but does a great disservice to civic society generally.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/readers-editor/defamation-act-must-be-extended-to-end-northern-irelands-embarrassment-31154824.html>

BBC/Mail/ITV

Items on the Archbishop of Canterbury's visit to Egypt stating Justin Welby talked about what he called "atrocious pressure" on Christians and other minority communities across the Middle East. Speaking to the BBC as an Islamic State video emerged, appearing to show the killing of 30 Ethiopian Christians in Libya, he said, "I believe Islamic State is deeply evil - even to its own supporters." *Mail & ITV* say the Archbishop personally handed over letters of condolence from the families of British terror victims to the leader of the largest Christian minority in the Middle East, Bishop Tawadros.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3045737/Archbishop-passes-victim-letters.html#ixzz3Xp6wHQW0>
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32374031>

BBC

Item on the migrant boat disaster quotes the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby's BBC interview with Lyse Doucet, saying all European and Mediterranean countries have to take responsibility for dealing with the problem. See *also above*.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/live/world-32372351>

Mail/Times/Sun/Guard/Express/BBC/Ind/Tel

Report that the Islamic State group on Sunday released a video purportedly showing the execution of some 30 Ethiopian Christians captured in Libya. Addis Ababa condemned the reported killings and said its embassy in Egypt was trying to verify the video to ascertain if those murdered were indeed Ethiopians. Includes reference to Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, being in Egypt to offer his condolences over the beheadings of the Copts in Libya.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3045632/IS-shows-purported-executions-Libya-Ethiopia-Christians.html>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/middleeast/article4416389.ece>

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/19/isis-video-purports-to-show-massacre-of-two-groups-of-ethiopian-christians>

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/571518/Islamic-State-Christians-murdered-Libya>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32373166>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-video-shows-beheadings-and-execution-at-gunpoint-of-30-ethiopian-christians-and-destruction-of-churches-in-libya-10187749.html>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/11548360/Islamic-State-murders-30-Ethiopian-Christians-in-Libya.html>

Mail/Tel

Reports that Sir Bruce Forsyth has spoken out in favour of assisted dying, saying that watching his first wife suffer with dementia has convinced him he wants to 'die with a bit of dignity left'. They say Sir Bruce joins other celebrities and politicians who support assisted dying, including the late author Terry Pratchett, former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Carey, and Labour peer Lord Falconer.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3046434/Sir-Bruce-Forsyth-backs-calls-assisted-dying-Entertainer-says-people-allowed-die-bit-dignity-left-watching-suffering-wife.html#ixzz3Xp0Ua8S0>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/assisted-dying/11548480/Bruce-Forsyth-legalise-assisted-dying-for-dementia-sufferers.html>

Tel/Mail

Reports claiming that Ed Miliband set out to woo Christian voters signalling he would consider new measures to protect their right to express their beliefs in the workplace after a series of controversial cases. They state the Labour leader also pledged to work closely with faith schools and said religious groups running community projects should not face suspicion from councils and government bodies over their motives. Mr Miliband, who is an atheist, took his place alongside worshippers at Praise House, an evangelical Church in Croydon, South London,

for a lively Sunday service in which he took questions from the congregation.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/general-election-2015/11548444/Miliband-woos-churchgoers-with-religious-freedom-pledge.html>

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3045771/Praying-miracle-Ed-Self-confessed-atheist-Labour-leader-bows-head-campaign-bus-stops-church.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490

BBC

Item on a memorial unveiled to honour 160 men who died fighting in World War One but were never publicly commemorated, which was dedicated by the Bishop of Wolverhampton, Clive Gregory. It states families of the men, from the former mining village of Chadsmoor near Cannock in Staffordshire, raised £12,000 for the stone obelisk.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-stoke-staffordshire-32372824>

BBC

A 24-hour infra-red "swan cam" has been launched at the Bishop's Palace in Wells, a report states. A palace spokesman said the "state-of-the-art" equipment by the moat had been installed just in time to catch the female swan building a new nest. The infra-red capabilities allow night-time viewing.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-somerset-32372807>

BBC

Item on a memorial service to remember Hull's vessels used in the 1982 Falklands conflict. It states the service later today at Holy Trinity Church in Hull will be followed by a parade to Victoria Pier to cast wreaths into the Humber.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-humber-32371814>

Mail

Report on attacks and violence against immigrants in South Africa, quotes a statement from the foundation of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, South Africa's Nobel Peace Prize winner, who said, "(We are) witnessing hate crimes on a par with the worst that apartheid could offer. Our rainbow nation that so filled the world with hope is being reduced to a grubby shadow of itself."

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3045989/South-Africas-Rainbow-Nation-turns-dark-immigrant-attacks-rise.html#ixzz3Xp5dSiic>

Ind

Further reports on the Turin Shroud going back on display. *Independent* examines whether it is a medieval hoax.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32368134>