



## State papers suggest Ian Paisley was more moderate than it seemed

Outwardly, Ian Paisley was vehemently against the Anglo-Irish Agreement, but state papers hint at a different attitude behind the scenes, the Irish Examiner reports.

Ian Paisley seemed to lead the vocal campaign against the Anglo-Irish Agreement in Northern Ireland, but state papers just released hint

strongly of a somewhat different attitude behind the scenes, although he could hardly have been more acerbic in his public pronouncements.

During a sermon in his church, for instance, he denounced Margaret Thatcher in trenchant terms. “O God,” he said, “we pray this night that Thou wouldst deal with the Prime Minister of our country. O God in wrath take vengeance upon this wicked, treacherous, lying woman.”

Behaving as an archetypal demagogue, he represented the visceral antagonism of Unionists outside City Hall in Belfast before a quarter-of-a-million people in November 1985. He denounced Thatcher for saying the Republic of Ireland must have a say in Northern Ireland. “We say never, never, never, never,” roared Paisley.

Unionists were considering a general strike on the lines of the Workers’ Strike that brought down the Sunningdale Agreement of 1974. UUP leader James Molyneaux was in favour, but Paisley advised against it.

Paisley and Molyneaux met with Thatcher in London on February 25, 1986. Though she refused to suspend the Anglo-Irish Agreement, she was clearly rattled by the intensity of the

unionist opposition, so she offered new arrangements to allow the unionists to make their views known to her government, as well as consultations about the handling of Northern Ireland business at Westminster.

Molyneaux and Paisley agreed to reflect on her suggestions, but Paisley was in for a stormy reception when he got home, according to information secretly supplied to David Donoghue of the Anglo-Irish Secretariat at Maryfield.

Paisley was met at his home that evening by Peter Robinson, and representatives of the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), Apprentice Boys, and the Orange Order.

The meeting began “in friendly terms but quickly turned acrimonious,” according to Donoghue’s informant.

“Paisley felt that he and Molyneaux had brought back something from London which could be represented as a concession by Mrs Thatcher.”

“What you’ve got is not enough,” Robinson insisted. “These boys want a strike,” he said, alluding to the others present. A series of heated

exchanges ensued, with Paisley opposing a strike, while Robinson was insisting on one. The others, apparently, agreed with Robinson, because they let him “do most of the talking for them”.

“There has been some speculation that he is pushing the strike idea in an effort to wrest the DUP leadership from Paisley,” Donoghue added....

...Michael Lillis reported to the Department of Foreign Affairs from Belfast on April 30 that Northern Secretary Tom King believed that Molyneaux and Paisley were serious about their desire for peace and compromise. King thought they were alarmed at the extent to which they had initially sowed extreme opposition to the agreement.

“King believes that only the fragile survival of Molyneaux and Paisley stands between him and a chaotic summer. “Paisley was in the forefront of the campaign against the agreement,” Thatcher later wrote.

“But far more worrying was the fact that behind him stood harder and more sinister figures, who

might all too easily cross the line from civil disobedience to violence.”

## **Reverse Advent success at The Larder food bank in East Belfast church**



“In December we had over two hundred client visits to The Larder in St Christopher’s, Mersey St. , Belfast” reports Adrian McCartney. “This represented about five hundred people given food supplies for up to five days. Reverse Advent was incredibly successful, churches, individuals, businesses, and even one school taking boxes



with an Advent calendar. “Put something in rather than take something out.” Tuesday 20 December was return day and over ninety boxes came back!” he said.

Adrian continued, “Could we also take this opportunity to thank churches and individuals all around us who have been partners in this ministry. Together we served just under 3000 people in 2016. It is our privilege to see the smiles and hear the thanks, but it isn’t possible without lots of others being God’s provision.”

## **Children ‘at risk’ in Christian fundamentalist schools in the UK, warns government watchdog**

A number of Christian fundamentalist schools have been downgraded by government inspectors following an investigation by *The Independent* which revealed children at some schools that follow the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) curriculum [are taught that LGBT people are inferior and girls must submit to men.](#)

The investigation also uncovered historic allegations [of corporal punishment, exorcisms being performed on children and schoolgirls being “groomed” for marriage to much older men.](#)

Inspectors say they fear “children are at risk” at some schools after finding in some ACE institutions safeguarding plans to be flawed or non-existent and that staff who come into contact with children sometimes have not undergone background checks to see if they are safe to work with children.

*The Independent* previously revealed allegations by former pupils that children were subject to serious mistreatment at some of the schools, which are operated by fundamentalist Christian communities and teach more than a thousand pupils at 26 different ACE schools in the UK.

More at -

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/accelerated-christian-education-europe-ofsted-dfe-inspection-report-a7502616.html>

## **Vicar burnt helping parishioner set on fire by Christmas candle**

A vicar was left with 30 per cent burns to his fingers after rushing to help a parishioner who accidentally set herself on fire during his Christmas Day service, the Daily Telegraph reports.

The Reverend Frank Coleman, 58, was delivering his sermon when he noticed the woman had been set alight after leaning on a candle.





***The Rev Frank Coleman was injured rushing to the aid of a woman who had strayed too close to a candle***

She appeared to be unaware of what was happening until Mr Coleman rushed towards her and put out the flames with his hand.

Luke Jules, a member of the congregation, said: “Acting with urgency, as the flames were close to the server’s long hair, he swiftly attempted to extinguish the flames. He batted them with his hand – and didn’t even pause to place down the chalice of wine in his hands. Thankfully he was successful and extinguished the fire before the server suffered any burns.

“Unfortunately, because of the material of the polyester blend of his robes, the burning material stuck to Frank’s hands as he fought the fire.”

The woman was uninjured but Mr Coleman suffered serious burns. He said: “The server, who helps me with the service, must have leaned too close to the candle and her shoulder caught fire, but she had no idea.

“I saw it scarily close to her hair so I just darted forward and patted it out. I think for a second she thought I was just hitting her. I don’t want to over-dramatise things but I do think a couple of seconds later and her entire hair would have gone up.”

Mr Coleman was taken to A&E where he was treated for his injuries, following the Christmas Day drama at Upper Caldecote Church in Bedford.

He added: “Some nurses took me aside after it happened and plunged my hand in cold water then after the service one rushed me over to A&E.

“It’s not how I imagined spending Christmas but the response from everyone was very touching.”

## **News links to reports on faith, politics and education**

### **Zambia students graduate via Omagh online BBC News**

Five students from Zambia receive diplomas in computing after being taught by tutors who were thousands of miles away in County Tyrone.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-38392057>

### **Ireland near top of the EU table for shootings**

Examiner - Ireland is towards the top of the EU table for shootings and firearms seizures, according to one of the first studies of its type in Europe.

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/ireland-near-top-of-eu-table-for-shootings-437410.html>

### **Premier**

Reports that a Christian mother of a young woman who was shot dead in Birmingham says she praises God everyday for helping her continue campaigning against gun crime and gangs. Beverley Thomas' 18-year-daughter Charlene Ellis died along with a friend, 17-year-old Letisha Shakespeare, when four men opened

fire with a machine gun and pistols outside a party early on 2nd January 2003. Beverley's story is included in a new book by the Archbishop of York called *Agape Love Stories*. It explores the personal encounters of God's agape love in the lives of 22 people.

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/God-has-helped-me-carry-on-says-mother-of-murdered-daughter>

## **Times**

Report that an anti-fracking protest camp in North Yorkshire has divided the local community, with residents fearing that the area will be taken over by anarchists and extremists. Protesters occupied a field near Kirby Misperton just before Christmas, days after the High Court rejected a legal challenge brought by anti-fracking campaigners. Anti-fracking protesters who live in the area also expressed concern about the camp. Graham Cray, a retired bishop, has written of his concerns on Facebook, The Times reports. <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/fracking-village-fears-violence-at-protest-camp-xrs3vf03s>

## **Premier**

Further coverage that the C of E is being urged to release some of its unused land for affordable

housing. A growing number of Christian denominations are disposing of underused or unused land, selling or donating it to developers and housing associations to build new homes, according to the charity Housing Justice.

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Christian-charity-calls-on-Church-release-land-for-new-homes>