



# CNI

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## **NEWS FOCUS - Church leaders react to UK referendum**

### **Archbishop Richard Clarke personally disappointed**

Speaking during a 1916 centenary pilgrimage to France and Belgium, the Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke said: 'While I am personally disappointed at the outcome of the UK referendum, nothing should deflect people across the island of Ireland from focusing on good relations with one another and ensuring that any sense of division is avoided at this time.'

### **Pray for our leaders, for wisdom and strength' - Moderator**

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rt. Rev. Dr. Frank Sellar, has urged people to pray for our political leaders and for

‘wisdom and strength’ in light of today’s EU Referendum result.

Dr. Sellar said:

Today some of us will be feeling delighted, angry or bewildered; a time of mixed emotions at the onset of profound change.

For believers, our identity is found in Jesus, not in Stormont, Westminster or Brussels. Real hope is secure, as Christ is sovereign and good.

Today we pray for our political leaders, for wisdom and strength as they lead us through this period of change.

## **Archbishop Jackson of Dublin**

*The Primate of the Southern Province of the Church of Ireland, the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin and Bishop of Glendalough, issued this statement.*

At this time of considerable uncertainty for the people of Ireland following the outcome of the referendum on continuing EU membership in the United Kingdom, our hopes and prayers are for stability and clarity in finding the best path forward.



Many people in Ireland fear the impact that this momentous decision will have on their lives in ways that are still incalculable and unknown. We pray for wisdom and foresight on the part of those who lead us politically, socially and economically and for those who will negotiate on our behalf on how best to express and fulfil our role in Ireland within the European Union.

## **Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church**

*The Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church,  
the Most Rev David Chillingworth, Bishop of St*

*Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane, issued this statement.*

The decision of the people of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union is one of the most significant political events of our generation. It turns away from the long term project of building a new Europe following the devastation of two World Wars. It aspires to reclaim national sovereignty and to establish Britain as a major independent world trading nation.



The people have spoken and the will of the people must be respected.

In a hard-fought and at times bruising campaign, it has been clear that debate about Europe has allowed a number of difficult issues to come to the surface. The debate and the patterns of voting suggest that our politicians in recent years may not have paid sufficient attention to some of the deeper issues which are present in our life. The inevitable and necessary period of reflection which must now follow will allow space for questions of poverty and immigration to be explored.

Those of us who live in Scotland are aware that the outcome of the Referendum is potentially of great significance. We hope that our politicians on all sides will take time for careful reflection and consultation.

This a time when we should hold all of our political leaders in our prayers.

## **Bishops of the Church in Wales**

*The Bishops of the Church in Wales issued the following joint statement.*

In facing the outcome of the EU referendum, we commend a period of calm and reflection as the

UK seeks to find its way forward in this new situation.

As Christians we hold to the Gospel values of truthfulness, inclusion, and respect; and so after the passionate debate, we pray for reconciliation amongst the divided factions in our nations, communities and families.

We pray for the United Kingdom and for our partners in Europe and the rest of the world at this time of uncertainty, as we continue to work together to build a just and peaceful future in which all people can flourish.

## Archbishops of Canterbury and York

*The Archbishop of Canterbury **Justin Welby** and the Archbishop of York **John Sentamu** issued this joint statement*

On Thursday, millions of people from across the United Kingdom voted in the referendum, and a majority expressed a desire that Britain's future is to be outside the European Union.

The outcome of this referendum has been determined by the people of this country. It is



now the responsibility of the Government, with the support of Parliament, to take full account of the outcome of the referendum, and, in the light of this, decide upon the next steps. This morning, the Prime Minister

David Cameron has offered a framework for when this process might formally begin. The vote to withdraw from the European Union means that now we must all reimagine both what it means to be the United Kingdom in an interdependent world and what values and virtues should shape and guide our relationships with others.

As citizens of the United Kingdom, whatever our views during the referendum campaign, we must now unite in a common task to build a generous and forward looking country, contributing to human flourishing around the world. We must remain hospitable and compassionate, builders of bridges and not barriers. Many of those living among us and alongside us as neighbours, friends and work colleagues come from overseas and some will feel a deep sense of insecurity. We must respond by offering reassurance, by cherishing our wonderfully diverse society, and by affirming the unique contribution of each and every one.

The referendum campaign has been vigorous and at times has caused hurt to those on one side or the other. We must therefore act with humility and courage – being true to the principles that make the very best of our nation. Unity, hope and generosity will enable us to overcome the period of transition that will now happen, and to emerge confident and successful. The opportunities and challenges that face us as a nation and as global citizens are too significant for us to settle for less.

As those who hope and trust in the living God, let us pray for all our leaders, especially for Prime Minister David Cameron in his remaining



months in office. We also pray for leaders across Europe, and around the world, as they face this dramatic change. Let us pray especially that we may go forward to build a good United Kingdom that, though relating to the rest of Europe in a new way will play its part amongst the nations in the pursuit of the common good throughout the world.

## **CEC President, Bishop Christopher Hill**

*Following yesterday's referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union, Bishop Christopher Hill, President of the Conference of European Churches, has issued this statement.*

By a narrow margin, the UK Referendum (51.9 per cent voting leave) has recommended to its Parliament that the UK should leave the EU. As President of CEC but also as a bishop of the Church of England, I am proud that my passport, as a British subject, also has European Union as part of its title.

I deeply regret the result and also the manner of the Referendum. This in spite of Church leadership in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland being supportive. There are no doubt real



issues to discuss and these issues are not only debated in the UK but in many member states of the EU.

But many of the allegations, especially over migration issues which were decisive in the Referendum, bear no relation to the actual facts and the tone – at least in the UK – has often been hysterical rather than rational, not least amongst “populist” parties and some sections of the press.

A major task for CEC now, in which the UK Churches remain strong supporting members, will be to contribute to such a rational debate, starting with the already existing dialogue within

our member Churches throughout Europe, including those Churches in member states on the southern and eastern borders of the EU.

In addition, CEC can be a space where UK Churches can reassure our partners in the wider Europe that we still believe in the establishment of structures for peace, justice and stability across our one Continent and indeed that such structures serve for global wellbeing as well as our own.

Above all I hope the churches – including our partners in the Catholic Church – will be able to revitalize a vision for Europe much broader than the mere economic, a vision informed by a Christian understanding of society which looks to the common good of all, supporting human rights and inclusive communities without collapsing into purely individualistic demands, and understands (from the inside of faith) the need for dialogue between faiths and all people of good will.

Now that the high profile campaign is over, I look for this serious discourse as urgent for the future of Europe as well as the UK.

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