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## **Breakaway GAFCON bishop to Europe takes leave due to “very difficult personal matters”**



**Citing “very difficult personal matters,” Andy Lines, Gafcon’s Missionary bishop to Europe, is taking a leave. Lines accepted the proposal of a leave made by Peter Jensen, outgoing General Secretary of Gafcon.**

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The General Secretary of Gafcon, since January 1, is Archbishop of Benjamin Kwashi of the Diocese of Jos, Nigeria.

According to Wikipedia, **Andrew John Lines** (born 1960) is a British Anglican bishop. Since June 2017, he has been the Missionary Bishop to Europe of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), a province outside the Anglican Communion. Since 2000, he has been Mission Director and CEO of Crosslinks. He is also the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Anglican Mission in England (AMiE), the missionary arm of GAFCON in England. In June 2017, it was announced that he would be made a bishop for ACNA and GAFCON; he was consecrated on 30 June 2017.

Lines is a bishop in ANiC (the Anglican Network in Canada, a diocese of ACNA).

Unless it was arranged while Jensen was still GS of Gafcon, there is no explicit indication the leave was formally arranged with AMiE, ANiC, ACNA, Gafcon UK or Gafcon. In particular, it is unknown whether Kwashi had a say in the arrangement.

**A statement by Lines dated January 25, 2019 and posted by ANIC:**

*As some will be aware, the Autumn and early part of this new year has (sic) been a particularly demanding and stressful time for me and for my family. Demanding, because there is so much to be done in my different responsibilities, and operating in the midst of fast-moving events in our Anglican churches. Stressful, because in addition to my mother's deteriorating health, I have been confronted with very difficult personal matters.*

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*That all this occurred after a period of intense ministry and with the emotional wrench of leaving Crosslinks after 18 years' service, perhaps explains why I have not coped as well as I might have hoped. On medical advice, and with the*



*encouragement of close friends, confidants and colleagues, I have agreed to Peter Jensen's proposal that I should take a break to recover and regroup. I am very grateful to all*

*those to whom I am accountable for their support and encouragement, particularly my colleagues in the Anglican Church in North America. This has not been an easy decision because I am acutely aware of the battle raging around all of us, but if I am to be of use in the longer term, it appears not only wise but necessary. I want to assure you that despite everything Mandy and I remain committed to this ministry for which I was set apart.*

*The plan is for us to move house in February to reduce the financial burden. In March, Mandy and I head to Sydney, Australia, for three months. We will be accommodated in Moore Theological College and will benefit from the support and advice of Peter and Christine Jensen. Please pray for us; we are hugely grateful to Peter and many others who are making this possible. Please pray for:*

- our recovery, refreshment and renewal.*
- our preparations to re-enter the fray in June with all the planning that will require.*

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- *Mandy and me, and our children who have stood staunchly with us throughout these months, for protection in the midst of the spiritual battle.*
- *the churches that I have been supporting in Anglican Misson (sic) in England, Scottish Anglican Network and those who are not part of a particular network; pray for their ongoing faithfulness and effective outreach.*
- *Gafcon UK: I am immensely grateful for the support of James Stileman of Gafcon Global, and of Susie Leafe and Andrew Symes; pray that the urgent needs of development, organization and finance would come together and progress whilst I am away so that we can support confessional Anglicans across Europe, for the sake of the lost. I am grateful that Susie and Andrew will be able to call on the support of Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali (President), as well as Lorna Ashworth and Vaughan Roberts as Vice Presidents.*

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.” (2 Cor 1:3-5)*

*With love in Christ  
Andy Lines*

## **4 Corners Festival kicks off in high spirits**

The seventh 4 Corners Festival 2019 literally kicked off at Ashfield Girls High School on Wednesday evening.

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One hundred girls and boys from various schools from every corner of Belfast braved the coldest night of the year to come together in 'Game of Three Halves', a joint project of PeacePlayers International Northern Ireland and 4 Corners Festival.

It offered an evening of fun and high spirits and a chance for youngsters to learn a little bit about forgiveness through sport. In this case Gaelic football, soccer, rugby and basketball.

Pupils formed integrated teams and tried their hand at playing games they mightn't have otherwise expected to play given their community background.

There was also the opportunity indoors for mixed groups of young people to discuss their feelings when hurt is experienced and practical ways of forgiving and letting go.

At the conclusion of the event, the chairman of PeacePlayers International Northern Ireland, Trevor Ringland MBE, the former Irish rugby international and British & Irish Lion told the young people that they had a right to be proud of what they had achieved over a few hours and they were going home better equipped to forge friendships.

Fr Martin Magill, co-chair of the 4 Corners Festival Committee praised the partnership with PeacePlayers International Northern Ireland and thanked all who had participated and had contributed to such a successful event.

A welcome aspect of the evening was the number of parents present who said they had never attended a 4 Corners

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Festival event before and had heard of it through finding leaflets in their local church or by word of mouth.

More details of the evening, including video interviews with some of the organisers can be accessed on Twitter @4CornersBelfast and on Facebook @4cornersfestival

## **Bishop of Truro heads government review into the persecution of Christians around the world**

The Church of England's Bishop of Truro, Philip Mounstephen, is to chair an official British government review into the persecution of Christians around the world. Bishop Philip, who was Executive Leader of the Church Mission Society prior to becoming Bishop of Truro at the end of last year, appeared alongside Britain's Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, yesterday (Wednesday) at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London to launch the review. "We wanted to do this not just because freedom of worship is a fundamental human right", Mr Hunt said, "but because also freedom of worship is the invisible line between open societies and closed societies."

Mr Hunt began his remarks with reference to last Sunday's terror attack on the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in the Philippines, which claimed the lives of 20 people – many of whom were attending Mass. "This was a very vivid reminder of the terrible truth that freedom of worship is something that cannot only not be taken for granted, but is a growing concern all over the world", he said.

Egypt had also experienced the type of terror experienced in the Philippines, Mr Hunt said, while persecution also took

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place in Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, and North Korea. “We know that there are serious and growing issues in China. And also in countries where we might have hoped there wouldn’t be a serious issue, like India, we know that this is becoming a much bigger issue.” He said that a quarter of a billion Christians are suffering some sort of persecution all over the world.

“Where freedom of worship is hampered or prevented, then usually that’s a sign of lots of other things going wrong, and we wanted to make sure that the UK is doing everything to champion the values that we all believe in. . .

“And we want to, if I can put it this way, banish any hesitation to look into this issue without fear or favour that may exist because of our imperial history, because of the concerns that some people might have in linking the activities of missionaries in the nineteenth century to misguided imperialism. And all those concerns may have led to a hesitation to really look at this issue properly, and we don’t want that to happen.”

He said he was looking for two outcomes from the review: “first of all in practical terms, I want to make absolutely sure when I am meeting a foreign minister, a prime minister or a president in another country, and there’s an issue concerning religious freedom, and in particular the rights of Christians, I want to make sure that it is absolutely on my list of things that I need to raise. . .

“Secondly, I want to see what we can do to build an international coalition of countries that are concerned about this so that we can play, I think the role that Britain has played for many years, which is whilst recognising that we’re

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not a superpower, at the same time, not underestimating the power and influence that we have as a very well-connected country to bring together other countries that share our values and give a voice to people who don't have a voice."

He said that the people suffering persecution "are some of the poorest people on the planet and they happen to have the faith that I have, that many people here have, and they happen to be suffering very badly for it.

"There is sometimes good news. I think the news about Asis Bibi this week is extremely encouraging, but the truth is that unless we make a real effort and unless the world knows that we are making a real effort, those bits of good news will become the exception and not the rule. And that's what we don't want to allow to happen."

Bishop Philip also spoke at the launch of the review. He said: "the Christian faith today is primarily a phenomenon of the global south; and therefore it is primarily a phenomenon of the global poor. Despite the impression that we sometimes have to the contrary – not least when you have a bishop standing in front of you – the Christian faith is not primarily an expression of white western privilege. If it were, then perhaps we could afford to ignore this issue or, more likely, this issue would not exist.

"But unless we understand that the Christian Church is primarily a phenomenon of the global south and the global poor, we will never give this issue the attention that it so clearly deserves."

He described the Christian faith as a "truly global phenomenon" and said that persecution against Christians was not limited to a single challenge – specifically a Muslim



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context. “This independent review is not a stalking horse for the Islamophobic far right”, he said, “and nor will it give the Islamophobic right a stick to beat Islam with.

“I want to be very clear about that. There may well be questions asked about how the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have addressed the issue of persecution of Christians in Muslim majority countries; but there will certainly be questions to ask of other contexts too and we would be failing if we did not ask those questions.”

### **Christian faith had always been seen as a subversive challenge to those in authority**

The Bishop said that the Christian faith had always been seen as a subversive challenge to those in authority. “‘Jesus is Lord’ was the earliest Christian confession”, he said. “Saying ‘Jesus is Lord’ meant that Caesar was not. The Christian faith will always challenge those who make absolutist claims for themselves. The challenge to absolute power is a legitimate concern of any democratic government.”

The leader of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, the Archbishop of Westminster, **Cardinal Vincent Nichols**, welcomed the review, telling the audience at its launch that religious faith was becoming increasingly important across the world. He pointed to the vitality of Christians as people of hope. He also made the point that being a Christian always involved giving a critique of power.

The review will explore Christian persecution across the Middle East, Africa and Asia and the British government’s response to it. It will recommend a comprehensive policy framework when it reports before Easter.

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## **Priest killed in 'freak accident' with his car**

A parish priest has been killed in a "freak accident" involving his car at a parochial house.



Fr John

Cummins, parish priest of Abbeyleix, Co Laois, died following the incident which is understood to have happened at around 3pm yesterday. The popular priest had been appointed to serve in the parish in summer 2017.

He had said Mass earlier in the day before tragedy struck.

Fr Cummins was originally from Newbridge, Co Kildare, where his family are very well-known and run a business there.

Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty said in a statement: "It is with deep regret and sadness that I announce the sudden death of Fr John Cummins, Parish Priest of Abbeyleix, after a freak accident today with his car at the parochial house.

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"My thoughts and prayers are with Fr John's loving mother, brothers and sister, his priest colleagues throughout the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, his team in Faith Development Services and ACCORD, Carlow, and, of course, his many parishioners in Abbeyleix whom he held in his heart so dearly.

"At this time of profound heartbreak, I also remember his former colleagues at the Institute of Technology, Carlow, and the parishioners of Carlow Cathedral Parish."

### **Tributes to Abbeyleix priest**

Roger Child said - "So very sad to hear of the death of Fr John Cummins in Abbeyleix. He hosted RTÉ's Eurovision Masses at Christmas in 2013 from Carlow Cathedral with generosity, calm and grace. My thoughts are with his family and many devoted parishioners. RIP. "

Tom Gordon wrote - "Devastated to learn of the tragic death of friend and ecumenical colleague, Fr John Cummins. John was Administrator in Carlow cathedral with whom we shared the St Willibrord pilgrimage to Luxembourg. A greatly-loved priest of immense kindness and integrity. Utterly heartbreaking."

### **New rector for north Cork parish**

The Very Reverend Gary Paulsen, has been appointed rector of Fermoy Union of Parishes in the Church of Ireland Diocese of Cloyne (United Dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross)

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The Very Reverend Gary Paulsen, is currently Rector of Killaloe, and Dean of Killaloe and Clonfert. Born in Cape Town, South Africa, he worked first as a surveyor and project manager before setting up his own development company in property sales and construction.

He trained for ordination at The College of the Transfiguration, Grahamstown, South Africa before being made deacon in 2003 and ordained priest in 2004. He came to Ireland in 2011 and has made here his home.

Speaking about his appointment Gary said: “There are times in one’s life that a move feels right and it is such a time for me. I am excited about the new opportunity that the Fermoy Union of parishes offers. A new challenge always fills me with renewed energy. It is some eight years since I arrived on this island and it has been a wonderful journey thus far. I hope my different experiences in secular life and ministry in different contexts will bring new perspective to the Fermoy Union and I look forward to the move.”



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## News briefs

**+++Music at St Columbs Londonderry this Sunday** -  
11.00am Choral Eucharist with music by Noel Rawsthorne (Festival Eucharist) and George Dyson (Nunc Dimittis in F).  
4.00pm Choral Evensong with music by Herbert Ernest John Moeran (Evening Canticles in D) and Sterndale Bennett (God is a spirit). All are welcome.

**+++Time to set a SOP reminder** - On Songs of Praise on BBCOne this Sunday at 13:15. Katherine Jenkins will be celebrating Candlemas.

**+++Fancy having a go at the 5k fun run?** - Or maybe you could organise a family relay team? 5 events to choose from!! IRISH Meth world relief fund says - We're fundraising for our partner Wenchi Methodist Hospital in Ghana at this year's @marathonbcm on 5th May. Get in touch!  
worlddevelopment@irishmethodist.org

**+++Maynooth lecture** - The Devlin Lecture 2019 at St Patrick's, Maynooth, will be delivered by Prof David Hollenbach, Georgetown University, USA, 4th March @7.30pm, Loftus Halls, St Patrick's College, #Maynooth. Title: "Human Rights in Catholic Social Thought: A Living Tradition and Some Urgent Challenges Today." #theology

**+++Quote from Madeleine L'Engle:** "How do we learn to bless, rather than damn, those with whom we disagree, those whom we fear, those who are different?"

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## **FEBRUARY 1 in Christian history**

**January 31, 1561:** Anabaptist leader Menno Simons, for whom Mennonites are named, dies in Wustenfled, Germany

**January 31, 1686:** King Louis XIV of France, having already revoked the Protestant-tolerating Edict of Nantes, orders all Waldensian churches burned. The Waldensians, members of a pre-Reformation tradition that stressed love of Christ and his word and a life of poverty, were soon devastated: 2,000 killed, 2,000 "converted" to Catholicism, and 8,000 imprisoned.

**January 31, 1737:** Jacob Duche, Episcopal clergyman and chaplain to the Continental Congress, is born in Philadelphia. He later had a change of heart about the war and asked George Washington to have Congress recall the Declaration of Independence.

**January 31, 1892:** Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon, one of the greatest public speakers of his day, dies at Mentone, France.

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