



GAFCON pushes ahead with new bishop to support traditional marriage

A new bishop will be consecrated to support UK Christians who support the traditional interpretation of the Bible's view on marriage.

The Global Anglican Futures Conference – GAFCON – is to appoint a 'missionary bishop' for conservative Christians in Europe, bypassing Anglican Churches in England and Scotland. GAFCON is an international group of

conservative Anglicans who believe marriage is intended to be a life-long union solely between one man and one woman.

The move was announced in a communiqué from GAFCON'S meeting of conservative primates in Lagos, Nigeria. Made up of nine Anglican provinces and five 'branches', the organisation claims to represent the majority of the world's Anglicans. It was set up in alarm at what founders saw as the increasing acceptance of homosexuality among Western, more liberal Churches, and is adamantly opposed to any compromise on the issue.

GAFCON said the new bishop will minister to churches who have rejected the Church of England "for reasons of conscience".

In a statement, the group said: "...within England there are churches that have, for reasons of conscience, been planted outside of the Church of England by the Anglican Mission in England (AMiE).

"These churches are growing, and are in need of episcopal leadership.



"Therefore, we have decided to consecrate a missionary bishop who will be tasked with providing episcopal leadership for those who are outside the structures of any Anglican province, especially in Europe."

The decision comes after the organisation previously warned of a "troubling ambiguity from diocese to diocese" in the Church of England on teaching and pastoral practise concerning sexuality.

In February, LGBT campaigners welcomed a decision by the Church of England's governing

body to reject the House of Bishops which advised that teaching on marriage should consider it a union between one man and one woman.

The announcement, which followed a meeting of GAFCON leaders in Nigeria last week, also came after the organisation raised "immediate concern" over plans by the Scottish Episcopal Church to approve in full gay marriage next month.

In the statement, GAFCON said: "During our meeting, we considered how best to respond to the voice of faithful Anglicans in some parts of the Global North who are in need of biblically faithful episcopal leadership.

"Of immediate concern is the reality that on 8th June 2017 the Scottish Episcopal Church is likely to formalize their rejection of Jesus' teaching on marriage.

"If this were to happen, faithful Anglicans in Scotland will need appropriate pastoral care."

AMiE said: "AMiE are delighted that the GAFCON Primates have given their support for the consecration of a Missionary Bishop.

"We thank God that the number of AMiE churches is growing and that an increasing number of individuals are exploring ordination with us.

"As a result, we have an urgent need for more episcopal leadership."

Loughgall IRA commemoration 'sickening', says C of I rector, victim's son

The son of a Co Tyrone IRA victim has branded Sunday night's 'Loughgall martyrs' commemoration near Pomeroy "sickening". Rev Alan Irwin's father Thomas was shot dead in March 1986 – 12 months before the SAS shot and killed eight members of the IRA's ruthless East Tyrone unit as they attacked Loughgall RUC station in 1987, Mark Rainey reports in the News Letter.

One of the guns taken from the body of a dead terrorist at Loughgall had been used to murder the DOE worker and part-time UDR man near Omagh. • Morning View: Loughgall event illustrates the challenge facing unionists
Yesterday evening, Sinn Fein leader Michelle



Rev Alan Irwin with a picture of his murdered father Thomas

O'Neill was the main speaker at a march and rally in honour of the eight-man IRA gang. The event got under way from the car park of the Church of Immaculate Conception at Altmore.

One of those killed at Loughghall, Eugene Kelly, is buried in the graveyard of the church. Rev Irwin, from Lack in Co Fermanagh, said the presence of Ms O'Neill at the commemoration was disappointing but not surprising. "It is another glorification of those who had deliberately set out to murder," he said.

“I think what surprises me is how gullible, or how naive, a lot of people are to have swallowed some of the rhetoric – that they (Sinn Fein) are talking about ‘equality’ and all of these things but continue to justify terrorism.

“If somebody is committing a criminal act they should face justice, but to start to glorify them, and to put them on some sort of a pedestal, is sickening.”

Commenting on the use of Catholic Church property, apparently without prior permission, Rev Irwin said: “I suppose that is a matter for the Roman Catholic Church, but I do think they need to come out and make a very clear statement in relation to the use of their property.

“But then it doesn’t surprise me as Sinn Fein don’t really have respect for anyone else – they are quite happy enough to use anybody’s property. The church needs to come out and say that it is not happy for its grounds to be used for that type of event.”

On the day former IRA leader and deputy first minister Martin McGuinness was buried in March,

Rev Irwin led a service in Lisnaskea to remember the innocent victims of terrorism.

He said the Catholic Church “needs to take a firmer approach in relation to terrorism and terrorist activity,” and added: “It is a matter for them but I do think they need to be very clear on where they stand.

“There is fear there. This whole peace process was built on fear and continues to be built on fear. The threat is always there – that fear of going back to ‘the bad old days’. I think that’s why people are afraid to speak out or say anything.”

Over a number of days the News Letter has asked the Catholic Church whether it condoned or condemned the use of its property as an assembly point for the commemoration parade in honour of an IRA gang. No response has been received to date.

C of E to guide voters in general election



The Church of England is expected to publish guidance in the coming days on how Christians should vote in June's general election.

According to the Daily Mail, the nature of the advice has not yet been fully agreed by senior figures however it will call for the recognition of the importance of faith in society.

The publication will also call for reconciliation between those with opposing political opinions and between those for and against Brexit.

The move would mark the second time the church has acted in such a way, after it published a pastoral letter to Anglicans ahead of the general election in 2015.

The guidance published two years ago was accused of being pro-Labour, and it attracted

criticism from conservative politicians including Iain Duncan Smith and Nadine Dorries.

The church denied it's 52-page report - which called for a national debate on the Trident nuclear deterrent, criticised inequality and warned against military intervention in the Middle East - was trying to tell believers how to vote.

Archbishop of Canterbury Most Rev Justin Welby avoided keeping his political views on the EU referendum a secret last summer when he spoke out in favour of the UK staying in the European Union.

Bible Society's General Election resource

However you feel about another trip to your polling station, you're probably hoping the outcome is for the 'common good'. This ancient idea of caring for the interests of others is as important now as ever.

“That's why we've created *Calling People of Goodwill: The Bible and the Common Good*, a six-session guide exploring a biblical perspective on the idea.



'We hope that this book will help people to re-explore the Bible in a way that will make Britain a better society,' says Fleur Dorrell, the Bible Society's Scripture Development Co-ordinator, who partnered with Together for the Common Good to create the resource.

'At a time of uncertainty and challenges to our shared values and practices, this is a timely reminder that we are called as the church to seek the common good of all in our communities, whether local, national or global,' says Archbishop Justin Welby.

To explore this for yourself, pick up your copy of *Calling People of Goodwill: The Bible and the Common Good* from our [online shop](https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/products/9780564046577/?).

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Queen's University finds a brilliant way of highlighting world famine

A 'hunger banquet' has been organised at Queen's University to highlight the millions of lives threatened by famine.

The interactive public event will see guests draw tickets which will assign them to a high, middle or low income tier – based on the latest statistics about the number of people living in poverty.

Each income level receives a corresponding meal.

The 20% in the high-income tier are served a sumptuous meal, the 30% in the middle-income section eat a simple meal of rice and beans, and the 50% in the low-income tier help themselves to small portions of rice and water.

Right now about 30 million people are experiencing alarming levels of hunger and malnutrition in north-eastern Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia, and in war-torn Yemen. Famine has been declared in South Sudan, is likely to be already happening in parts of in northeast Nigeria, while Yemen and Somalia are on the brink.



Event organiser Evan Storrs-Fox added: “Global hunger is more important now than it has ever been. We could not be organising this event at a more topical and a more critical time, as millions of people are starving. One country is in famine and three others are on the brink. This is unprecedented in modern times.

“So the hunger banquet will be an engaging experience with a serious message and an important point – and hopefully it will inspire others to join us in campaigning for global action to tackle extreme poverty and injustice.”

The QUB Oxfam Society’s Belfast Hunger Banquet takes place on Wednesday May 3 at

www.churchnewsireland.org

7pm in the Great Hall at Queen's University. Tickets are free from Eventbrite, but any voluntary donations on the night are welcome and will go to Oxfam's Hunger Crisis Appeal. Report courtesy News Letter.

Rector of Mossley Parish appointed

The Rev Peter Jones, currently curate assistant in Drumglass Parish, Armagh Diocese, has been appointed rector of Mossley Parish, Diocese of Connor.

Peter, 35, is married to Kim and they have two children, Timothy aged three and one-year-old Hannah.

Originally from Tobermore, Peter is a former pupil of Rainey Endowed School in Magherafelt, and read History at the University of Ulster in Coleraine. After graduating, he did a PGCE and taught history for eight years at Lisneal College in the Waterside, Londonderry. He was involved in administration and pastoral care and was a Year Head. He was also a Principal Examiner in GCSE History.

Peter trained at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute and was ordained a deacon in 2013. He served an internship in Maghera

Parish and after being ordained a priest in 2014 he was curate assistant in Drumglass.

“Kim and I are looking forward to moving to Mossley,” Peter said. “We felt a real strong sense of God’s call. We will leave Drumglass with heavy hearts as we have a brilliant relationship with the people there, but God is in this and we are very excited about what awaits us in Mossley and about getting to know the people in the parish and ministering to them.”

Peter is interested in reading, walking and football, and was involved in setting up a football team in Drumglass. He succeeds Canon Neill Cutliffe who has retired.

No date has been set for the institution service in the Church of the Holy Spirit, Mossley.

Archbishop Sentamu’s mission at Tour de Yorkshire

The Archbishop of York marked the start of the Tour de Yorkshire by hosting a three day mission in the region. The race which is in its third year has seen thousands line the streets to see the sport's elite riders take on the Yorkshire course.



It started on Friday morning in the town of Bridlington with a route through the Yorkshire Wolds and Moors before finishing in Scarborough.

Among those at the start was Dr John Sentamu. He's working with local churches to reach out to those attending.



Rev Richard Hare from Emmanuel Church in Bridlington said: "He was chatting to children

taking part in an advance race and will be around talking to the crowd.

"We've got a whole lot of other events lined up over these three days for him to meet people and share the Gospel, and it's going to be really good."

Fresh concerns over celibacy rules for Catholic priests

Rules preventing Catholic priests in England and Wales from getting married should be open to fresh discussion, it has been claimed.

The call comes from the Movement for Married Clergy (MMaC) which fears a celibacy requirement is deterring men from pursuing ordination.

Secretary of the MMaC, Chris McDonnell, said "The Pope has made it very, very clear that he wants a listening church.

"We're just asking that the bishops of England and Wales listen to the voice of the people because among the laity there is very little opposition to this."



Earlier this year, Pope Francis suggested he was open to Catholic priests being allowed to marry under certain circumstances.

Concerned there is now a "crisis" in priest numbers, the MMaC is calling for a national commission comprising of bishops, clergy and laity to consider the idea.

Some 25 men began diocesan priesthood training for serving in England and Wales last year, significantly fewer than in 1985 when the figure stood at 150.

The diocese of Salford announced at the beginning of the year 100 parishes would merge, due in part to declining priest numbers.

Chris McDonnell said merging parishes is not a proper solution, explaining: "It is not fair on a

man of 65 or 70 years old to suddenly find he's got not one but two parishes to look after when, in fact, there are other solutions which could give us a better solution to the crisis we are currently facing."

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, told the Irish Catholic in February he saw no reason to change the church's rules concerning celibacy.

Today in Christian History, May 2

May 2, 373: Church father Athanasius, "the father of Orthodoxy," dies. He attended the Council of Nicea, and after becoming bishop of Alexandria, he fought Arianism and won. He was also the first to list the New Testament canonical books as we know them today.

May 2, 1507: Reformer Martin Luther is consecrated a priest, a role in which he would serve for 13 years before being excommunicated.

May 2, 1559: John Knox, having spent several years on the Continent studying and writing, returns to Scotland to help lead the Reformation there.

May 2, 1821: Methodist missionary William Taylor is born in Virginia. He ministered to miners during the California gold rush and later became missionary Bishop of Africa (1884-1896). Taylor University in Upland, Indiana, named itself after him.

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