



# CNI

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## General Synod members express major concerns on Irish government proposals for admissions to C of I schools

**Grave discontent and concern was expressed during the debate on the Report of the Board of Education presented to the General Synod in Limerick yesterday, Friday May 5.**

Proposing the report, **Michael Hall** (Elphin and Ardagh), outlined an extremely busy year for the Board of Education in the Republic of Ireland. He said that the proposed Admissions to Schools Bill had been a topic of much discussion. He said it was interesting that the Minister for Education and Skills should choose the offices of Equate, a special interest lobby group, from which to announce a 12 week consultation period on school admissions.

“The issue of school admissions has received much media attention and debate driven mainly

by two special interest groups; Equate and Education and Equality. Our concerns were heightened further when the Minister reduced the consultation period to four weeks from 12 weeks, subsequently increased to 8 weeks after much lobbying from the Board of Education, Schools from the National and Secondary sectors, Churches, Parents, past pupils, The Incorporated Society and other interested groups or individuals,” he said.

He outlined **Minister John Bruton’s**, four options in relation to school admissions:

The removal of the Equal Status Act 2000 section 7(3) (c)

The introduction of the “nearest school” rule

The introduction of a “defined catchment” area

The introduction of a “quota system” based upon religious denomination.

Mr Hall said all of the suggestions would impinge negatively on Church of Ireland primary and secondary schools. “Indeed it is the Board’s belief that the proposed changes have the potential to fundamentally undermine the Church Of Ireland Methodist Presbyterian Society Of Friends Patronage Body schools at both Secondary and Primary level to serve the Protestant population in the Republic of Ireland

.... Thus removing the very purpose for their existence,” he stated.

He said that the Board of Education sought the views of parents of children who attend primary schools under Church of Ireland patronage. 87 percent of parents said it was important to them to have access to schools that provide education within a Church of Ireland/Protestant ethos.

He said that the board had made a number of submissions to the Oireachtas Committee on Education and Social Protection on admissions to schools. He said that the Department of Education did not accept their concerns. He pointed out that the Labour Party had introduced a Bill seeking to limit the role of the Board of Management in managing schools applications for admission to schools and legislating that Religious Education must be timetabled for the end of the school day.

He outlined a further change regarding school funding and said Protestant children attending many rural Church of Ireland Secondary Schools, were now in receipt of less funding for their ICT education from the Department of Education and Skills than if they were to choose

to attend their local Catholic Voluntary School or ETB school.

Mr Hall said that the provide equality for a minority population requires additional and enhanced funding and support beyond that provided to the majority population. “Positive affirmation of a minority has proven extremely beneficial to the development of equality throughout the World. We do not ask for more funding than other schools, we are asking for the same along with equivalence of respect without discrimination,” he stated. “Otherwise there is a danger that the Republic of Ireland might be looking at the “Last of the Anglicans!” by the mid to end of this century.”

He drew synod’s attention to the work of Safeguarding Trust and the establishment of a new Safeguarding Trust Board. “The formation of the Safeguarding Trust Board places safeguarding as a core concern of the Church in its governmental structures and reaffirms the strong commitment of the Church of Ireland to ensuring that its policies on child protection, vulnerable adults and safeguarding in general are robust and seek a standard of excellence,” he stated.

Concluding, Mr Hall drew members of synods' attention to the proposed changes to admissions and funding which would, he said, impinge negatively on national and secondary schools and with unforeseen consequences for a minority

Debate on the Republic of Ireland section of the report opened with a contribution from **Margaret Jacob** (Cashel, Ferns and Ossory) said she said she was very disappointed at the proposal to put RE into discretionary time at the end of the day.

**Edward Pierce** (Kilmore) said that his school was quick to respond to the request from the Board of Education and they sent letters to their local TDs which resulted in a question being raised in the Dail to which Minister Bruton said he believed it was unfair that children living some distance from a school should get preference over children of a different religion who live closer to the school and he also said it was unfair that parents feel pressure to baptise their children. Mr Pierce said the Minister gave no grounding for his beliefs. He said it was incumbent on all members of synod to make their views known to the minister.

The **Revd Eithne Lynch** (Cork) spoke of developments with the new local ETB school in Mallow into which the local Church of Ireland school has integrated mostly smoothly but with some problems.

**Canon John Clarke** (Meath and Kildare) said synod should send out a clear message to the Minister of Education and Skills and his department that the proposed changes to school admissions are not acceptable. He urged people to attend the CIPSMA conference in the Heritage Hotel in Laois which will be attended by the Minister.

**The Revd Patrick Banber** (Elphin) spoke about the place of Religious Education in school and said it would be a great sadness to see the place of RE downgraded. Schools have the opportunity to pass on faith and religion and they often have the opportunity to relate to more children and young people than churches do, he said.

**Sheila Hunt** (Cork) spoke about the place of the Church of Ireland in the Religious Education degree.

**The Ven David Huss** (Raphoe) said that the Minister's proposals would not create one extra primary school place and do not solve the problem. He said that in Donegal the Church of Ireland schools presented the inclusive option for many parents.

In response, Mr Hall thanked all who spoke to the report and reemphasised how important the issues raised are to Church of Ireland schools. The report was accepted by synod.

## **Home for Good? - Report deals with issues faced by returning Irish emigrants**

A new report released yesterday by Crosscare Migrant Project details difficulties experienced by returning Irish emigrants 'Red-tape', employment, accommodation and emotional well-being are the main challenges associated with returning to Ireland according to a survey of recently returned Irish emigrants.

Forming the basis of a new report by Crosscare Migrant Project, the responses provide real insight into the experiences of Irish emigrants

who have made the move back to Ireland in the last two years. 400 people took part in the detailed research project.

Many of those who took part in the research were living abroad for between 3 to 5 years. Several expressed surprise at the unexpected emotional cost of returning to Ireland. Some stated feeling alienated upon return, *‘Mentally it was tough. At times it felt like the country I was born in was making it as difficult as possible for me to move back’*. Others note, *‘People expect you to just return to normal as though you have never been away’*. Overwhelmingly, being closer to family is given as the main reason for return.

Ireland has recently seen increased numbers of its emigrants returning from abroad, with inward migration of Irish citizens in 2016 up by 74% on the previous year<sup>[1]</sup>. Though many of the difficulties raised in the report affect all of Ireland’s population, these can be very difficult to overcome for people returning in crisis.

Speaking about Crosscare Migrant Project’s work with returned Irish citizens, Sarah Owen (Irish Abroad Networking Officer with Crosscare) said:

*“As we have been seeing for some time in our direct work, not all our emigrants make a*



*planned return to Ireland. Some people come home in very difficult situations, with little income or support. For this reason we are liaising with Government over practical issues such as the application of the Habitual Residence Condition, and fast tracked PPS numbers for people coming home with children. We have also been in contact with the Department of Housing in relation to barriers for returning Irish emigrants accessing homeless supports.”*

As well as challenges, the report also features benefits to return and key advice for others considering a move back to Ireland, such as ‘*Research and budget in advance*’ and ‘*Do it for yourself and not for others*’.

Crosscare Migrant Project’s new report entitled ‘Home for Good?’ was launched at yesterday’s Global Irish Civic Forum in Dublin, and is available online at <http://bit.ly/2pCNWds>.

[1] [www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/pme/populationandmigrationestimatesapril2016/](http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/pme/populationandmigrationestimatesapril2016/)

### **About Crosscare Migrant Project:**

Crosscare Migrant Project is a Dublin based non-governmental organisation funded by the **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

**Emigrant Support Programme** to work with intending and returning Irish emigrants. It is a project of Crosscare ([www.crosscare.ie](http://www.crosscare.ie)), the social support agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin. The focus of Crosscare Migrant Project's direct information and advocacy work is with those who are marginalised. For returning emigrants, Crosscare Migrant Project helps people to access statutory supports, apply for social welfare payments and place appeals on refusals if necessary. For intending emigrants Crosscare Migrant Project provide an overview of visa systems for major destination countries as well as pre-departure information and referrals to Irish support organisations abroad.

Website: [www.migrantproject.ie](http://www.migrantproject.ie)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/CrosscareMigrantProject/)

[CrosscareMigrantProject/](http://www.facebook.com/CrosscareMigrantProject/)

Twitter: [twitter.com/irishmigrants](https://twitter.com/irishmigrants)

## **World development heavily supported in central debate at General Synod**

The debate of the General Synod's Standing Committee which carries on Synod's work during the year is customarily and rightly one of

the two main debates - the other being that on the Representative Church Body.

The C of I's official world development body, The Bishop's Appeal, reports to Synod via the Standing Committee. The Bishops' Appeal funded grants totalling €457,243 over the last year.

The **Bishop of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh** drew Synod's attention to the report of the Bishops' Appeal Advisory Committee and said that change was impacting Bishops' Appeal. He said that members of Bishops' Appeal would appeal that we would reach out to our brothers and sisters in the developing world.

**Iris Suitor** (Armagh) spoke about East Africa which is experiencing the worst famine since 1945. She said Bishops' Appeal was supporting two charities on the ground – Christian Aid and Tearfund. She gave stark figures for people facing starvation in South Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen. Natural disasters in Kenya and Ethiopia were also highlighted. She urged members to help these other people in the world who are suffering. She said Bishops' Appeal envelopes were available at their stand.

The **Revd John Ardis** (Ross) said Bishops' Appeal also helped with overseas development in rural development, health and information. He said many worthwhile projects came before them. If more money was available to put into development projects, crises might be averted, he said. He said many lives were improved by generous donations to projects. He said there were a number of diocesan Bishops' Appeal projects which benefited both the recipients and the home dioceses.

The **Bishop of Tuam**, chair of Bishops' Appeal, acknowledged the support received from across the Church of Ireland. Disasters are just one aspect of their work, he said, highlighting the development work carried out which linked with local churches. To ensure this continued, he stated, funding needed to continue. Two thirds of our funding comes from one third of churches in the Republic of Ireland but he said if Bishops' Appeal was to continue to be the channel of the Church of Ireland then all parishes in all dioceses needed to contribute.

He recognised that there were more demands on people's money – last year there was €15,000 less to dispense on development projects. There is a crisis in East Africa but because the media is not highlighting it, funds are not coming in.

Some time ago it was suggested that each adult be asked to donate one day's income – “what a difference that would make” he said.

**Val Rogers** (Westport) highlighted the sending of three containers of warm clothing to Syrian refugees from his diocese. Rhonda Willoughby (Meath and Kildare) spoke of the Meath and Kildare Good for the Sole project for the Leprosy Mission and highlighted the Food for the Sole cookbook which is on sale in support of the project. She said Bishops' Appeal is helping people at grassroots in all sorts of ways.

**Phylis Grothier** (Cashel, Ferns and Ossory and Mothers' Union) thanked all who contribute and support Bishops' Appeal which supports a number of MU projects making a sustainable difference to family lives in Burundi, Ghana and Ethiopia. **David Millar** (Dublin) spoke of Christian Aid's support for a project by Holy Trinity Killiney.

## **New portrait of Rt Revd Walton Empey former Archbishop of Dublin**

A new portrait of the Rt Revd Walton Empey, former Archbishop of Dublin, was unveiled in Christ Church Cathedral last Sunday morning. The portrait, by Olivia Bartlett, was



**Former Archbishop of Dublin, the Rt Revd Walton Empey, with Dean Dermot Dunne and artist Olivia Bartlett, with the new portrait of Bishop Empey which will hang in the chapter room.**

commissioned by the Friends of Christ Church Cathedral and will hang in the Chapter Room.

Bishop Empey was present at the Cathedral Eucharist, accompanied by his wife Louie and their children and grandchildren. The congregation included a great many friends and well wishers.

Speaking at the unveiling, Mrs Bartlett, said she had been deeply honoured to be commissioned to paint the portrait and outlined her artistic

process. Bishop Empey had expressed the wish that the portrait depict him as he was in office and after a lengthy search and trawling the internet, she said she eventually found a suitable photograph on the front page of an old copy of the Friends of Christ Church Cathedral News.

In reply, Bishop Empey said he was deeply touched when told of the Friends' decision to have a portrait commissioned. He said he was delighted with the new portrait and thanked the Friends, Olivia and Dean Dermot Dunne for enabling it to happen.

Bishop Empey retired as Archbishop of Dublin and Bishop of Glendalough in 2002.

## **Christian Aid Week marks 60 years of support for people in poverty**

Christian Aid will mark 60 years of Christian Aid Week between the 14-20 May 2017 and is inviting people to join them in supporting refugees and people living in poverty around the world.

The charity has been working with refugees since the Second World War, and is not turning its back now.

“Today, tens of millions of people across the globe are forced from their homes due to war, conflict and disaster, said Rosamond Bennett, CEO of Christian Aid Ireland. “Many are forced to make life-threateningly dangerous journeys in search of a safe place to call home.”

“Christian Aid Week unites churches every year to achieve incredible things to support our global neighbours in need, who are suffering through no fault of their own,” she said.

“This tremendous support enables Christian Aid and its global partners to reach people seeking a safe place to call home, with essentials including food and shelter, as well as advocating for policies to protect them and help them on the ground.

“We’re incredibly grateful for the generous support and goodwill of churches, communities and volunteers each Christian Aid Week. We look forward to another inspiring week of collections, Big Brekkies and coffee mornings this year that will support life-changing work across the globe.”

While the majority of today’s refugees seek sanctuary in poor countries, in 2015 some one million people crossed into Europe. With borders



across the continent now closed to refugees, thousands are stranded – and in need of urgent help.

You can help to change the lives of refugees fleeing conflict and crisis this Christian Aid Week by donating online at [www.christianaid.ie](http://www.christianaid.ie) or calling 028 90 648133 (Northern Ireland) or 01 4967040 (Republic of Ireland).

## **Acting Bishop of London calls churches to pray for 'strangest general election in many a long year'**

The acting Bishop of London is calling on churches to pray ahead of the 'strangest general election in many a long year'.

Bishop Pete Broadbent says the capital's congregations must engage by voting, holding hustings and praying as the country prepares to go the polls for the second time in two years.

'Facing perhaps one of the strangest General Elections in many a long year, it is important that the public role of the Church and our



***Pete Broadbent is acting bishop of London after Richard Chartres retired earlier this year***

commitment to the well being of our parish and chaplaincy communities is made clear,' he says.

Broadbent's intervention comes before the Archbishops of Canterbury and York are expected to make a more official, lengthy intervention on the general election.

Broadbent went on to ask London churches to pray for pray for all their local candidates, regardless of party loyalties.

'Please therefore include the election, your local candidates, and the future direction of the UK in your public intercessions and private praying.'

Broadbent, current Bishop of Willesden, raises concerns that because of the snap nature of the

election, church hustings may be more difficult to organise.

'There is a tradition of churches and faith communities holding hustings - we are one of the very few organisations that still do this. Given the suddenness of the calling of this election, the framework locally may not be in place – please check and encourage your parishioners to attend and participate.'

## Today in Christian History, May 6

**May 6, 1527:** An army of barbarians who had been sent—but were no longer controlled—by Emperor Charles V sacks Rome. Many Protestants interpreted the attack as a divine rebuke, and some Catholics agreed: "We who should have been the salt of the earth decayed until we were good for nothing," wrote Cardinal Cajetan, Luther's adversary. "Everyone is convinced that all this has happened as a judgment of God on the great tyranny and disorders of the papal court.

**May 6, 1638:** Dutch theologian Cornelius Jansen, who inspired a reform movement in the Roman Catholic Church, dies. Jansen opposed the teachings of the Jesuits and of Thomas

Aquinas, urging the church to rediscover Augustine's doctrine of irresistible grace. For his views on grace and predestination, the church prohibited Jansen's teachings.

## Today in Christian History, May 7

**May 7, 1274:** The Second Council of Lyons convenes with the goal of reunifying the Roman and Greek churches. Orthodox delegates agreed to recognize the papal claims and recite the Creed with the *filioque* clause, but the union was fiercely rejected by the majority of Orthodox clergy and laity fiercely rejected the union.

**May 7, 1605:** Russian prelate Nikon, patriarch of Moscow and the head of the Russian church, is born in Valdemanovo. When he tried to reform the church in 1642, a schism erupted, and the church deposed and banished him .

**May 7, 1833:** German pianist and composer Johannes Brahms is born in Hamburg. Intensely religious, he wrote many works for the church though one never officially employed him. He even compiled the biblical texts for his "German Requiem" himself.

**May 7, 1839:** Hymnwriter and pastor Elisha A. Hoffman is born in Pennsylvania. His songs

include "I Must Tell Jesus," "Down at the Cross," "Are You Washed in the Blood?" and "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms.

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