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Church of Ireland supports repeal of Republic's blasphemy law



Stephen Fry was investigated but not prosecuted under the Republic of Ireland's blasphemy legislation

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The Church of Ireland has issued a statement supporting the repeal of the Republic of Ireland's blasphemy law.

The legislation was used by the Garda to investigate comedian Stephen Fry last year.

Rt Rev Kenneth Kearon, Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe, The Church and Society Commission of the Church of Ireland, said that the church found the current reference to blasphemy in the Irish constitution "largely obsolete".

A referendum on the issue takes place on October 26.

"We recognise that there is grave concern at the way blasphemy laws have been used to justify violence and oppression against minorities in other parts of the world," he said.

However, the human right of faith communities to contribute to public debate on issues of importance without being subjected to attack or ridicule "must be acknowledged and respected" he said.

The church would have preferred to have seen a proposal to replace the blasphemy section of the constitution "with an article protecting freedom of religion and freedom of speech in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights" he added.

Part of Article 40.6.1 in the Irish constitution states: "The publication or utterance of blasphemous, seditious, or indecent matter is an offence which shall be punishable in accordance with law."

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It rose to prominence last year when a complaint was made over Mr Fry making critical comments about God during an interview on RTE, leading to a criminal investigation. No prosecution was brought.

Gay Byrne asked what Mr Fry would say to God if he died and had to confront him. In his imaginary conversation with God, Fry said he would tell Him: “How dare you create a world in which there is such misery that is not our fault? It’s not right.

“It’s utterly, utterly evil. Why should I respect a capricious, mean-minded, stupid God who creates a world which is so full of injustice and pain?”

Five years ago 14 churches, including the Catholic Church, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church and Methodist Church, endorsed a submission to government on the issue which said “the current reference to blasphemy in the Constitution of Ireland is largely obsolete”.

Divine Healing Ministries services to support Release International and the Persecuted Church

Divine Healing Ministries have two important services at St Anne’s Cathedral, Belfast in November and also a united Day of Prayer in Downpatrick involving all denominations.

The first special service is on Monday 12 November 12, 8pm, when the speaker will be world famous evangelist,
churchnewsireland@gmail.org

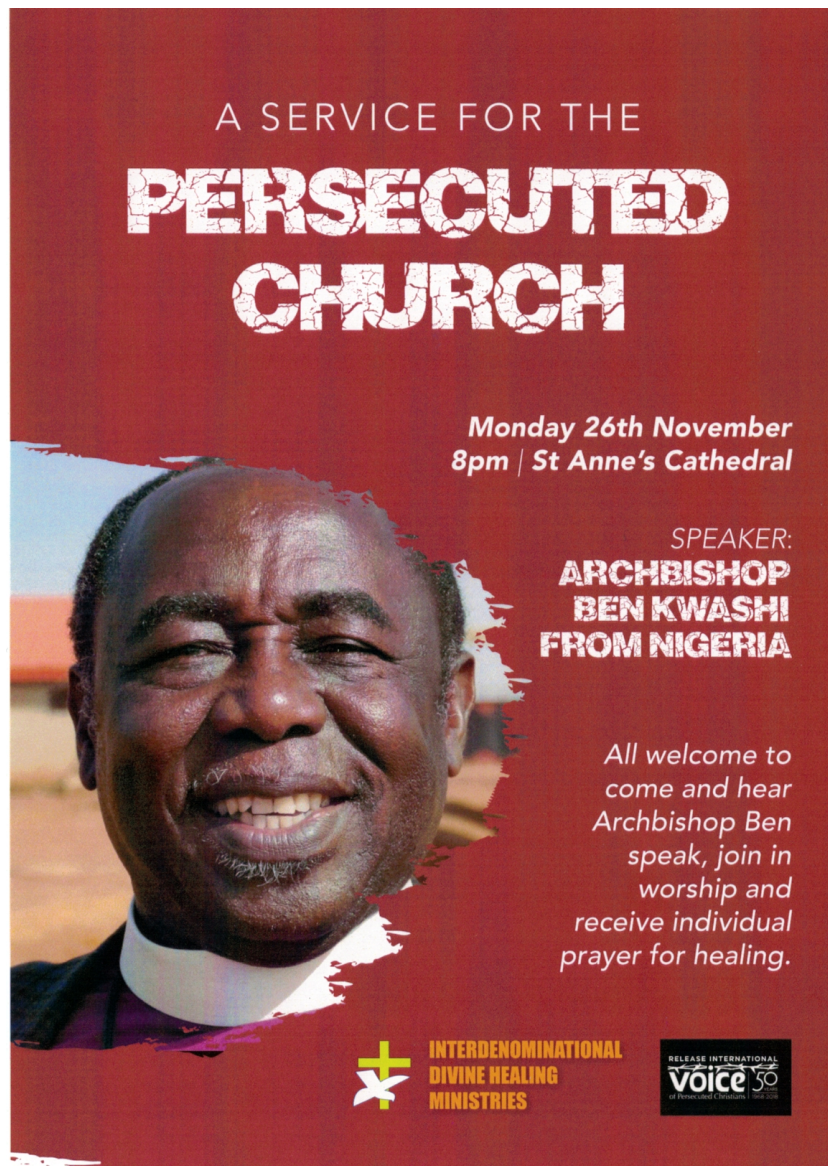
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David Hathaway. He has the largest evangelical mission in Europe. David initially became famous smuggling Bibles into the Soviet Union and has also worked with holocaust survivors in Israel. He has recently testified to a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit at a prayer meeting in Westminster Central Hall on September 8. He feels God has inspired him with a

powerful sense of direction for the coming days, leading up to the re-awakening in Britain so it will be exciting to hear what God is going to say through him at St Anne's!

On Saturday November 24 there will be a Day of Prayer for God's healing and peace in Downpatrick, County Down. Five Downpatrick churches of different denominations are involved and silent prayer and reflection will take place in each church, with everyone then walking to the next church behind a large wooden cross. Everyone will be encouraged to lay down burdens from the past and to seek God's peace. DHM will be participating and will offer the

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A SERVICE FOR THE
**PERSECUTED
CHURCH**

*Monday 26th November
8pm | St Anne's Cathedral*

SPEAKER:
**ARCHBISHOP
BEN KWASHI
FROM NIGERIA**

*All welcome to
come and hear
Archbishop Ben
speak, join in
worship and
receive individual
prayer for healing.*

 **INTERDENOMINATIONAL
DIVINE HEALING
MINISTRIES**



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INTERDENOMINATIONAL
DIVINE HEALING
MINISTRIES

Healing

SERVICE

Monday 12th November
8pm | St Anne's Cathedral

David Hathaway
SPEAKER

David is famous for smuggling Bibles into the Soviet Union. Recently he has been supporting Holocaust survivors from Russia in Israel.

Personal prayer ministry will be available at the service.

opportunity for individual prayer for healing too.

On Monday November 26 at 8pm, Divine Healing Ministries (DHM) is working with Release International to support the Persecuted Church with a service at St Anne's. The speaker will be the Rt Rev Dr Ben Kwashi.

Archbishop Ben

is well-known for faithfully serving persecuted Christians in Plateau State, central Nigeria. A powerful speaker, he will be sharing his experience in Nigeria at various venues around the UK between November 20th and 27th.

DHM Director, Fergus McMorrow said, "We are really looking forward to these 3 special events in November. David Hathaway will speak into the situation we face as Christians in United Kingdom at this time and is a Spirit-filled evangelist.

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“The Day of Prayer in Downpatrick follows other very successful days of prayer throughout the province and the unity in the churches in Downpatrick will add a special blessing.

“We are tremendously excited to be working with Release International on the service for the Persecuted Church at St Anne’s on Monday November 26. We will be praying for a real outpouring of the Spirit. This is a great opportunity to hear from someone who is literally on God’s front line in Nigeria!”

Youth delegation in Rome for live questions and answers session on the Synod

Eleven youth ministry directors from across Ireland have flown to Rome for a series of meetings with Archbishop Eamon Martin and Bishop Donal McKeown who are attending the Synod on Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment from 3 to 28 October on behalf of the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference. The youth ministry directors are accompanied by Emma Sisk of the Catholic Communications Office.

The Irish delegates met yesterday, Wednesday, at the Irish College, Rome, where they were updated by the bishops on the progress of the Synod. They discussed the implications of the Synod in the Irish context of evangelisation and the challenge of faith promotion amongst young people.

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The Irish delegation also hopes to meet with representatives of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales to share further experiences and insights from the Synod. The meetings will conclude with a session that explores the feasibility of building a national support network for young ministry and young adult ministry in Ireland.

A live question and answers from the Irish College will be streamed on Facebook between 6pm and 8pm (Irish time) today to discuss the Synod. Follow ADYC (Armagh Diocesan Youth Commission) and the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference on Facebook to submit questions and join the live discussion.

Evangelical C of E bishops offer olive branch to GAFCON

Evangelical bishops in the Church of England have offered a hand of friendship to GAFCON – the international Anglican grouping emerging as a potential future alternative to the Anglican Communion.

In an unexpected overture, 13 bishops have written a letter declaring that it is 'really important' for them 'to stay in good relationship' with their 'orthodox Anglican brothers and sisters' in GAFCON, and say they hope their initiative in reaching out 'can mark the beginning of better communication and liaison between us'.

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**Worship at
the GAFCON
2018
meeting in
Jerusalem**



At the same time, the bishops make it clear they have no intention of

leaving the Church of England at the moment, stating: 'We hope that you will understand our continuing commitment to [it], which we see as privilege, gift and calling, and that you will hear our request to work together closely as partners in the Gospel as we journey into God's future.'

The olive branch to GAFCON comes just days after an [earlier letter](#) from evangelical bishops warning the Church of England not to liberalise its sexual ethics. While there is some overlap in signatories, the list of those signing is not identical.

The bishops behind this second letter say they are writing in response to GAFCON's 2018 assembly in Jerusalem, and the 'Letter to the Churches' which was produced there. They express agreement with GAFCON's view of the crisis in Anglicanism: 'The analysis of the current tragic situation in the Anglican Communion which is set out [in GAFCON's letter]... is one which resonates with our experience as Bishops in the Church of England... We cannot disagree

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with the GAFCON diagnosis concerning the tear in the fabric of the Communion.'

And referring to GAFCON's call for liberal provinces not to be invited to the next global conference of bishops at Lambeth in 2020, the bishops say 'representations will need to be made' to Justin Welby 'by all orthodox Anglicans, in



The congregation of Cairncastle Presbyterian said farewell to their minister, Rev Fiona Forbes, on Sunday. In appreciation of her four years of ministry in the Co Antrim village, Clerk of Session Cowper Lynas presented Rev Forbes with a painting of the local area. Mrs Forbes has been called to Harmony Hill Presbyterian Church, Lambeg, and will begin her ministry there at the end of this month.

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order to indicate the strength of feeling on this issue'. They also 'resonate' with GAFCON's wish for its new conservative Anglican provinces in North America and Brazil to be invited.

The bishops say they see it as their 'present calling' to 'remain committed to the Church of England'. But they also admit: 'There may come a time when the Church of England... departs from the biblical and apostolic Faith – and this might occur for any number of reasons.' At the moment, however, they say 'the core doctrine of the Church of England remains unchanged'.

They add: 'There is some popular misrepresentation of the current House of Bishops which alleges that we are heterodox; we recognise the fears, but our personal conversations and experience lead us to the conclusion that [this] perception is far from the normative reality.'

The letter goes on to 'recognise that the GAFCON movement is something that has united Anglican Churches across the world who are looking for a different shape for a global Communion', but adds: 'We regret that no recognition is given in the letter to those who in good conscience believe it is right to stay within their current Anglican structure.'

Archbishop Foley Beach, Primate of ACNA and Chairman-designate of GAFCON, is currently on a tour of the UK. It is not clear whether he or the letter-writers have been in touch with one another yet to meet face to face.

The letter from the bishops says: 'We would welcome the opportunity to engage more fully in conversations with

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GAFCON UK about its polity, how it sees itself in relation to the Church of England, and about its missional strategy and purpose.'

The bishops say they were grateful for the invitation to attend GAFCON 2018. But they state that a problem in doing so was the requirement to sign an extra declaration of faith in addition to that which they had already made for the Church of England.

'Perhaps,' they say, 'there is room for some accommodation on this issue for those of us who would like to attend future GAFCON events'. They also ask for 'liaison between us' as GAFCON's networks are developed in England.

Signatories to both letters this week are the Bishops of Peterborough, Willesden, Durham, Blackburn, Ludlow, Plymouth and Carlisle, and Rt Rev Mark Rylands, formerly Bishop of Shrewsbury and now an assistance bishop in the Diocese of Exeter. Signatories to the first letter but not the second are the Bishops of Birkenhead, Maidstone, Lancaster, and the retired Bishop of Shrewsbury; signatories to the second letter but not the first are the Bishops of Winchester, Lewes, Guildford, Basingstoke, and Southwell & Nottingham.

One reason for some of the difference is that the signatories of this new letter do not include those bishops who attended GAFCON in Jerusalem – it comes specifically from evangelical bishops who did not attend. The full text of the letter is being posted on the website of the Church of England Evangelical Council.

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New Christian Aid report questions HSBC's green claims

HSBC has been accused of greenwashing by Christian Aid as the charity publishes a new report highlighting the bank's refusal to rule out coal financing in Vietnam, Bangladesh and Indonesia.

Today HSBC is hosting a [Make My Money Green event](#) as part of Green GB Week, and yet in its flagship energy policy it keeps the door open to financing the dirtiest fossil fuel in parts of Asia.

Last month fellow bank Standard Chartered announced a global ban on financing coal, undermining HSBC's claims to be a sustainable leader that is concerned about climate change.

[The report](#) dismantles HSBC's claims that more coal power is needed to address the developmental needs of these countries, drawing on independent evidence from a variety of sources and the views of local people. Nguy Thi Khanh, from Vietnam, is founder of the Green Innovation and Development Centre. She said:

“Remarkably HSBC's commitment excluded my own country, along with Indonesia and Bangladesh. My daughter, along with the rest of Vietnam, it seems, doesn't have the right to breathe clean air like the rest of the world.

“*Too poor, too foreign, let them breathe sulphur dioxide and smog*’, the policy might as well read. *‘They're only Vietnamese.’*”

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“Such lazily racist double standards are made all the more galling by the bank’s attempt to hide its greed behind a thin veneer of condescending concern for the provision of ‘cheap’ power in Vietnam.

“The argument that Vietnam needs more coal is nonsense. According to the recently launched Blueprint for Vietnam’s Clean Energy Future, if all the health and environmental costs of coal power are factored in, renewables are already cheaper than coal in Vietnam.”

The report points out that in light of the recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, warning of the consequences of global warming exceeding 1.5C, financing brand new coal plants in countries like Vietnam is not only reckless and irresponsible but will not address poverty either.

Helen Collinson, Campaign Lead at Christian Aid, said: “For people without access to energy in these countries living far from the grid, renewables offer a much cheaper, less damaging and future-proof form of electricity.

“The cost of renewables has fallen faster than not just the predictions of the International Energy Agency but even those of Greenpeace as well. The clean energy systems of the future are what these countries need, not yet more polluting fossil fuel infrastructure of the past.

“If not investing in coal is good enough for the rest of the world, why isn’t it good enough for Vietnam, Bangladesh and Indonesia? A number of charities and policy institutes have provided evidence to HSBC demonstrating that coal is

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not needed to tackle energy poverty and yet they refuse to close this loophole.”

She added: “If HSBC really cared about ‘making their money green’ they could start by ruling out new coal financing in every country, like Standard Chartered have done.”

World Bank President Jim Kim said in 2016: “If Vietnam goes forward with 40GW of coal, if the entire region implements the coal-based plans right now, I think we are finished...That would spell disaster for us and our planet.”

It is exactly this kind of disaster that HSBC is facilitating by keeping the door open to funding new coal projects in this region.

News briefs

+++Launch of Youth Ministry Network Podcast

If you are involved in youth work or if you want a peek behind the curtain of what your leaders think and talk about, tune in to our monthly podcast. Available wherever you listen to podcasts.

<https://www.podbean.com/media/share/pb-b27si-9b3a34>

+++‘What’s Love got to do with it?’

LGBT+ Inclusion, the Bible and the Church’ talk by Steve Chalke in Southampton 5.10.18 now available as download as well as listen-again on; [https://](https://lgbtpluschristianssouthampton.wordpress.com/)

lgbtpluschristianssouthampton.wordpress.com/

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Join us for
THE SHEEP TRAIL
at
CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL!



+++Knitters needed for Sheep Trail!

Want to take some time to relax and unwind? Contact Abigail at abigail@christchurch.ie for more information!

+++Cathedral manager nominee for Young Business Woman of the Year

Holly Wilson, Belfast Cathedral's hard-working and ever-smiling Events and Marketing Manager, is a finalist in the Young Business Woman of the Year Category of the Women in Business Awards NI.

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+++Derry International Choral Festival

As part of the City of Derry International Choral Festival, St Columb's Cathedral welcomes Chorus Lucundus, from Finland, on Sunday 28th October at 11.00 am. There are also various concerts and events taking place in the run up to the event, with the Every Voice Fringe Festival. On Sunday 21st October at 7.30pm in First Derry Presbyterian Church, the Joy! Sacred Concert takes place. It will be an interdenominational evening of sacred music from local community and church choirs.

+++Derry Remembrance events

The Parish of Glendermott & Newbuildings will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Armistice with its 'Thank you for the Sacrifice' exhibition, in Glendermott Parish Church, from 8-11th November, 2018. There will be a Remembrance Service on Sunday 11th November, at 11.30am. 'Let not their deaths be in vain.'

+++Inishowen harvest festivals

Two Harvest Thanksgiving services on Sunday 21 October:

- 3.30 pm in St Buadan's Culdaff
- 6.30 pm in St Finnian's Greencastle

Both services will feature guest preachers - Revd Sean Hanily in Culdaff, and Ven. Robert Miller in Greencastle. Tea to follow in Culdaff Hall and Greencastle Community Centre, respectively. All welcome, especially visitors!

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+++Girls' Brigade started in Sandymount 125 years ago

On 6th October 1893, God gave Margaret Lyttle the courage and vision to set-up Girls' Brigade in Sandymount, Dublin. Today Girls' Brigade reaches across the world in up to 50 countries. Give thanks for the work and commitment of the many ladies that have walked before us in GB, courageously serving our Lord and Saviour in sharing the gospel to so many girls across the generations. We give thanks for our leaders of today that still have the same vision to equip girls to have Christ at the centre of all that they do. As we celebrate 125 years of Girls' Brigade lets strive to do more and continue to share the love of Jesus. Seek, Serve and Follow Christ.

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+++Art Arcadia in Derry

This exhibition, at St Augustine's Schoolhouse, is well worth visiting. It runs until October 27th and offers an exceptional experience - for the connoisseur and for the more casual art lover. "The juxtaposition of ancient stones and contemporary art is mind-blowing," according to the Rector of St Augustine's, Rev Canon Malcolm Ferry. We couldn't have put it better ourselves.

+++CMS Ireland South Sudan prayer link

Yei Diocese - Please pray for Bishop Allison Theological College (BATC). Pray for Rev Cosmas Gwagwe and Rev Emmanuel Lokosang who have started at BATC as tutors. Thank God for these newly trained church leaders, supported in training by their parish links in Ireland.

+++Handel's Messiah for Focus Ireland

St Paul's Glenageary will host a performance of Handel's Messiah for Focus Ireland on Sat Novemebr 17 at 7.30 pm

+++Down & Connor youth insight

Fr Paddy White of [@youthlink](#) and [@DownandConnor](#) says a youth work methodology is crucial for youth ministry. Youth ministry is about exploring the faith. Youth work provides skills to facilitate this with young people. They are interwoven

+++Armagh Youth pilgrimages

Dermot Kelly of [@ArmaghYouth](#) says pilgrimage experience is a huge part of youth ministry in

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@armaghdiocese. They visited Lourdes, Fatima and Rome in the past and last year went to Croagh Patrick. The big question is how to engage them in parish after.

+++Down & Dromore thank young leaders

The many programmes and events run by DDYC are made possible by an amazing group of about 60 volunteer leaders and so each year the dioceses says 'thank you'.

Last weekend, 30 of those young leaders joined diocesan youth and childrens officers Julie and Tim for a celebratory meal at Pizza Express in Belfast.

The craic was great, and each volunteer was presented with a bar of chocolate and a unique DDYC mug with a personalised message. The message however, only reveals itself when hot liquid is poured into the mug so they were told to go home, relax, have a cup of tea and read their message (which was sure to make them laugh).

'These guys are brilliant,' says diocesan Children's Officer, Julie Currie. "They're so dedicated to DDYC and the children and young people in our programmes. Without the gift of their time we couldn't do Saturday Night Live, JAM Camp, the Kilbroney Adventure Camps, Confirmation Weekend, SERVE, the Praise Party and anything else we need them for!"



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+++At the Youth Synod in Rome

Buongiorno! Yesterday morning at the Irish College in Rome Irish Youth Ministry delegates discussed the challenge of engaging young people with the faith more actively at parish level. Welcoming them and a sense of belonging are key first steps. Aoife Walsh from [@limerickdiocese](#) talked about the gift of joy, energy and life that bring young people to our Church and faith. She says youth ministry is always "slow and steady work for the Lord

+++Youth & Children's Worker vacancy

The Parish of Glenavy is looking for a Children's and Families Worker. For information on this and other vacancies in Connor Diocese, visit <https://connor.anglican.org/vacancies/>

+++Iona Community video

Wonderful video with great historical footage from the original rebuild. Our Iona Centre has always been a place of hospitality, community, & inspiration. With your help, that will continue to be the case <https://iona.org.uk/capital-appeal-information/> ... [#crosstheline](#) <https://youtu.be/P19P1nfoNXk> via [@YouTube](#)

