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Legacy: Presbyterian Church publishes submission



An IRA gunman displays M60 Machine Gun on streets of Londonderry in 1978

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) has published yesterday (3 October) its response to the Secretary of

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State's legacy public consultation 'Addressing the legacy of Northern Ireland's past'.

In its 2,800 word submission the Church calls out both the deficiencies it sees in the current arrangements and also the limitations of the institutions set out in the consultation paper. At the same time it proposes revisions of the proposals in the consultation to enable them to be a means of improving the current arrangements, as the Church believes the status quo is not acceptable and a new approach is needed. It also warns that a rejection of the proposals will likely set the issue back for many years – if not forever - adding even more distress to victims and survivors.

The Church, which is one of Ireland's largest Christian denominations, and the largest Protestant denomination in Northern Ireland, states clearly that there was never any moral justification for the illegal taking up of arms by paramilitary organisations. It goes on to say that history cannot be rewritten in an attempt to portray as legitimate what was morally wrong and totally unjustified.

The submission points out that, 'As the consultation paper states, there is broad agreement that current arrangements are not delivering enough for victims, survivors and wider society. There are undoubtedly significant shortcomings in terms of truth, justice and care for people who have been physically and mentally injured during the Troubles. Meaningful discussion about reconciliation and related concepts of forgiveness, grace, remorse and repentance is also worryingly absent. We therefore agree that a new approach is required to address the legacy of the past. The

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choice we face as a society is between shaping a new approach and retaining the status quo.' (para 7).

10 key points to take away from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's legacy submission

- PCI is acutely aware of the limitations of the institutions set out in the consultation paper. However, we believe that the broad framework - investigations, information recovery, historical analysis/storytelling and a reconciliation aspect - with revisions, represents a potential opportunity to create a system that could provide some degree of closure to victims and survivors and bring a measure of healing to our society
- A rejection of this broad framework now would most likely set this issue [legacy] back by many years or potentially forever, and in doing so add even more distress to that already endured
- It is impossible to quantify the suffering which violence has visited on so many innocent people. There was never moral justification for the illegal taking up of arms by republican and loyalist paramilitary organisations
- History cannot be rewritten in an attempt to portray as legitimate what was morally wrong and totally unjustified
- A serious effort must be made to deal with the sense of moral and judicial outrage and hurt caused by the current legal definition of a victim which makes no definition between the perpetrators of violence and those attacked. This is morally unacceptable

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- There is broad agreement that the current arrangements are not delivering enough for victims, survivors and wider society
- The sad reality is that, while the pursuit of truth and criminal justice are important elements of addressing the legacy of the past, it is likely that there will be few prosecutions and many families will not receive the information they seek. In this context it would be wrong to raise the expectations of victims and survivors
- The much-awaited Mental Trauma Service and a pension for severely physically injured victims should also be included in any package of measures
- The governments of the United Kingdom and Ireland should cooperate with any legacy process and be prepared to acknowledge any wrongdoing by the British and Irish states
- Any suite of measures which fuels a culture of recrimination at the expense of reconciliation will have failed. PCI believes that reconciliation is fundamentally about the restoration of broken relationships. This will be the ultimate standard by which the success or failure of any new institutions is judged.

Rev Tony Davidson, minister of First Armagh Presbyterian Church and a member of the group that worked on PCI's submission said, "We have already said publically that the status quo in relation to dealing with the legacy of Northern

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Ireland's past is deficient and that the Secretary of State's proposals are not currently acceptable and need considerable change. Given that, we believe that the proposed broad framework does represent an opportunity to find an agreed and acceptable process which could command cross-community support.

“We hope and pray that being able to address the past effectively will enable us all, as we say in our submission, ‘to reimagine and create a better future based on a more reconciled community at peace with each other’.”

Mr Davidson was convener of the Irish Church Relations Committee from 1995 to 2002; Inter-Church Relations Board from 2002 to 2004, Church Relations Committee 2004 to 2007 and Nominations Committee 2014 to date. He is a member of the Council for Public Affairs and convenes its Dealing with the Past Task Group. The Task Group's remit is to take forward the project agreed by the 2016 General Assembly to explore how Presbyterians responded to the Troubles. He is also a member of the group that drafted the Church's response to the Secretary of State's legacy public consultation.

See also NEWS EXTRA on this site today.

Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade celebrates 125 years

A week on from celebrating its 750th Anniversary, the beautiful St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, was filled to capacity once again to mark 125 Years of the Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade serving the Church of Ireland.

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Dean Robert Townley, CLCGB Chaplain, Michael Warnock, Colour Bearer, Archbishop Richard Clarke.

This was the CLCGB's largest parade for some years, with nearly six hundred members and officers on parade. The companies from Killinchy, Seagoe and Aghalee in Down and Dromore were well represented.

Mrs Jill Armstrong, Deputy Lieutenant for County Armagh, and Councillor Julie Flaherty, Lord Mayor of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, were present for the Service of Thanksgiving.

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The Dean, the Very Revd Gregory Dunstan welcomed all those present to the Cathedral wishing them continued fulfilment in Christ's service in the years to come. The Very Revd Robert Townley, the Brigade's Regimental Chaplain, conducted the Service, assisted by CLCGB Development Officer, Victoria Jackson.

An integral part of the Service was the dedication of new Colours in memory of former CLCGB Commanding Officer, Harry Anderson. In the presence of many of the Anderson family, the Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke, Archbishop of Armagh, carried out the dedication.

The Archbishop also gave the address. He said that there were three important things that a Christian should do. One, that they should put Jesus 'first' in their lives; two, that they should put others before themselves; and three, that it was important that they pray and not be ashamed to do so.

The collection lifted towards the end of the Service will go to the Leprosy Mission NI, which has been the Brigade's charity for many years.

At the conclusion of the Service, the Brigade reformed into its Battalions and paraded back down the hill. The Deputy Lieutenant, Mrs Armstrong, took the salute just outside the Cathedral gates.

Litchfield learning visit to Cork

Two visitors from the Diocese of Lichfield – the Reverend Julia Cody and the Reverend Simon Douglas – were guests of the United Dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross from Tuesday, 25th September, until Friday, 28th September.

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The group from Lichfield Diocese joined the Bishop on a visit to Ashton School. Left to right: Martin, Ellie, Mr Adrian Landen (Principal), the Reverend Simon Douglas, the Bishop, the Reverend Julia Coady, Alison, Mark, and Drew Ruttle (School Chaplain).

They visited on the suggestion of the Bishop of Lichfield, the Right Reverend Dr Michael Ipgrave, to learn more about the Church of Ireland. Over the three days they engaged in a very varied programme that took them to parishes of different kinds, Ashton School, Bandon Grammar School, the Diocesan Service for Primary Schools, the chaplaincy at Saint Luke's Home, the Northridge House Education and Research Centre, the chaplaincy at Cork University Hospital, the Diocesan Office, the Diocesan Church Music Scheme, an Eco-congregation, the Children's Ministry Group, and to the Sam Maguire Bells in Dunmanway.

On one evening a dinner was hosted by the Archdeacon, and on the second evening the Bishop hosted a dinner. The visitors met clergy in farming communities to hear about the likely impact of Brexit, and they were also briefed about the

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Cork, Cloyne and Ross Centenaries Commemoration and Reconciliation Project.

Commissioning of Rathmines Readers makes diocesan history

Three new Diocesan Readers were commissioned by Archbishop Michael Jackson in Christ Church Cathedral on Saturday evening (September 29). In what is believed to be a first in Dublin & Glendalough, Ruth Gyves, Scott Evans and Scott Hill all come from the same parish – Holy Trinity, Rathmines.



Scott Hill, Ruth Gyves and Scott Evans with Archbishop Michael Jackson, Edward Lewis and the Revd Rob Jones before they were commissioned as Diocesan Readers.

The three newly commissioned Readers have trained over a two year period for Lay Ministry. Archbishop Jackson said

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that while they all emanated from the same parish the work there would radiate out to the rest of the diocese. He also paid tribute to long standing Holy Trinity Diocesan Reader, Edward Lewis, who has served in Lay Ministry for 53 years.

The service was led by another Diocesan Reader, Alan Rhodes and the cathedral was filled with family and friends from Holy Trinity, Rathmines and beyond. A large number of Diocesan Readers also attended to welcome their three new colleagues.

The sermon was preached by the Diocesan Director of Lay Ministry, the Revd John Tanner, who reflected on the ministry to which every baptised person is called. He said ministry was a privilege but it could also bring ridicule.



Newly commissioned Diocesan Readers Ruth Gyves, Scott Hill and Scott Evans with their fellow Diocesan Readers and Archbishop Michael Jackson.

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Referring to the first reading [1 Thessalonians 2: 1–9] Mr Tanner said that Paul had to defend his Gospel ministry and his own character. He suggested that those bringing the Gospel message continued to be subject to personal attack today.

Examining the motives of Paul's ministry, the preacher said they were intentional but did not come without cost and added that Paul needed courage to convey his message – he had been beaten and mistreated in Philippi but continued to preach the Gospel. He described Paul's manner of ministry as relational and he shared not only the Gospel with the people but lived with them also. His life was open, honest and accountable.

Mr Tanner said this had a lesson for the church of today. "We are called to live lives above reproach. The Gospel of Jesus Christ has been entrusted to us... God is calling us as Christians to walk together and work together in a relationship which will lead to spiritual growth," he said.

Kerygma, The Good News Choir, seeks new members

Do you have a good ear, and can you sing in tune with a voice that blends well with other singers?

If so, there's an exciting opportunity to join Kerygma, The Good News Choir.

The choir has been proclaiming the gospel through a variety of musical styles and genres since 2015. Musical Director, Lorna Palmer, formed the choir for the Year of Mission at

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Bishop Harold Miller's invitation and he remains their patron.

Lorna studied voice and piano at the Royal College of Music, London, and with her expertise and enthusiasm she inspires choir members of all ability and experience.

Being part of Kerygma will be fun and rewarding and singers from all Christian backgrounds are welcome to get in touch.

Please email kerygma.choir@gmail.com or call/text 077 7825 5599 for further information. The choir will be performing in their annual concert at Lisburn Cathedral on 17 November.

News briefs

+++Remembrance concerts at St Patrick's, Dublin - Two fantastic concerts this Remembrance to mark the centenary of the signing of the armistice on 11 November 1918.

First of all the Cathedral Choristers will be performing Benjamin Britten's War Requiem in the National Concert Hall with the National Symphony Orchestra, RTÉ Concert Orchestra and the RTÉ Philharmonic Chorus under the baton of David Brophy on Friday 9th November at 7.30pm. Tickets available from the NCH website:

https://www.nch.ie/Online/mapSelect.asp?BOset::WSmap::seatmap::performance_ids=A8BD1CC3-1DE8-41EE-A5DA-55F97DF9194F

Then on Saturday 10th November at 8.00pm the Cathedral Choir (Schola and Men's voices) will be performing Brahms'

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Requiem with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra under the baton of David Leigh. Tickets cost €17/20 and are available online:

[https://stpatrickscathedral.digitickets.co.uk/event-tickets/18212?](https://stpatrickscathedral.digitickets.co.uk/event-tickets/18212?branches.branchID=1045&_ga=2.242956034.1479177326.1538387932-411504631.1522138431)

[branches.branchID=1045&_ga=2.242956034.1479177326.1538387932-411504631.1522138431](https://stpatrickscathedral.digitickets.co.uk/event-tickets/18212?branches.branchID=1045&_ga=2.242956034.1479177326.1538387932-411504631.1522138431)



Moderator visits Crumlin Integrated School

The Moderator who is visiting Templepatrick Presbytery this week with prefects Sam and Janet, who gave him and his wife a warm welcome to Crumlin Integrated School. They heard about the shared education programme and the Year 8 transition project.

+++Harvest broadcast from Athy - On Sunday, 4th November, on RTÉ Radio 1 Extra, a Service will be broadcast from Athy Union of Parishes, led by the Rector,

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the Revd Olive Donohoe. The programme will start at 11.45am.

+++New organ video - Church Music Dublin have released the third video from the Organ Registration Series. The video, presented by Simon Harden, Lecturer in Organ at DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, was filmed in association with Pipeworks. Scroll down at -

<https://www.churchmusicdublin.org/organ/registration/>

+++CIYD Connect Training Days - The Church of Ireland Youth Department's next Connect Training Day, for the Southern Region, will take place in Thursday, 18th October, in the Silken Thomas Hotel, Kildare. Taking the theme of...
<http://dlvr.it/Qm8NF9>

The Church of Ireland Youth Department's next Connect Training Day, for the Northern Region, will take place in Thursday, 15th November, in Movilla Church, Newtownards. Andy Masters, Lead Pastor at Lagan Valley Vineyard, will speak on 'Self-Care'. The event will run from 10am to 1pm. For more information, please contact the CIYD Office (admin@ciyd.org).

News links

[Diarmuid Martin laments growing 'language of polarisation' within Church](#)

The Tablet

Diarmuid Martin laments growing 'language of polarisation' within **Church** ... Acknowledging the change in the religious culture of **Ireland**, the ...

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Religious ethos and schools: 'It's time we stopped playing the pretend game'

Irish Times

The present dispute in the Church of Ireland school in St Patrick's National School in Greystones smacks of similarity. Here the board of management ...

Martin warns church must renounce rank or privilege

RTE.ie

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin has warned that the Catholic **Church** in **Ireland** can only experience God's strength when it renounces any sense of rank, ...

Baptism barrier' to be removed from primary schools next year

Irish Times

Minority faiths, such as the **Church of Ireland**, will be allowed to prioritise members of their religion in order to protect their ethos in cases where they ...

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/baptism-barrier-to-be-removed-from-primary-schools-next-year-1.3649317>

Baptism barrier' for entry into Catholic primary schools set to be removed

The Irish Sun

However, minority faiths such as **Church of Ireland** schools will still be able to give priority to children of their religion in order to protect their ethos ...

Baptism barrier' lifted as schools can't choose pupils based on religion

Independent.ie

The practice was increasingly out of step with modern **Ireland**, where over 20pc of the parent-age population is non-**religious** and about 51pc of ...

Religion and Politics in Northern Ireland: What can the churches do next? - Irish Council of Churches

<https://www.irishchurches.org/news-blog/5335/religion-and-politics-in-northern>

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Sentamu retirement opens door for **Church of England's** first female archbishop

Telegraph.co.uk

He was the first black archbishop in the Church's history and the ceremony ... A Church of England spokesman acknowledged that the prospect was ...

[Archbishop of York Dr John Sentamu to retire - paving the way for **Church of England** to appoint ... - Daily Mail](#)

[Ugandan-born Archbishop of York, John Sentamu announces retirement - Uganda Christian News \(press release\)](#)

[Full Coverage](#)

[Bishops of **England** and Wales - Ad Limina final statement](#)

Independent Catholic News

Bishops of England and Wales - Ad Limina final statement ... of our visits we have been accompanied by two bishops of the Church of England, Bishop ...

[WATCH: Limerick Gospel **Choir** wow President Michael D Higgins with lively performance](#)

BreakingNews.ie

WATCH: Limerick Gospel **Choir** wow President Michael D Higgins with lively ... He was given a warm reception by the Limerick-based **choir**, who gave an energetic ... make the newest citizens of Ireland, the newest citizens of Limerick, unique. ... Want us to email you the top news stories each lunchtime?

