



Reaction to Presbyterian church decision on David Ford

Alliance Party leader David Ford has been “treated harshly” by his church over his political support for gay marriage, **his predecessor Lord Alderdice** has said.

Defending Mr Ford, Lord Alderdice (son of a Presbyterian minister), said that the party leader's faith was very important to him and that this would be a difficult time for him.

"He is elected by the electors of his constituency to represent all their views and yet what's been suggested, more than suggested, is that he has got to take a very particular line on a piece of legislation," Lord Alderdice told the BBC. He added: "I think that's an extremely difficult position for him and it seems to me that the way he has been treated has not been characterised by the kind of brotherly love, concern and thoughtful engagement that ought to be characteristic of the church."

Acting Alliance party leader Naomi Long called it a "sad day for the church".

She said: "As a fellow Presbyterian and someone who believes passionately in freedom of and freedom from religion, who supports the separation of church and state, and who supports equal civil marriage because of my faith, not in spite of it, this is a very sad day for the church and a very painful day for many of us who support David Ford's position.

"His faith is clear to anyone who knows him, a man of principle who respects those who hold different views: that others cannot be so gracious or show humility in disagreement is regrettable to say the least.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another,' John 13:35."

The Presbyterian Church has written to assembly members urging them to vote against today's motion, tabled by Sinn Fein, which would legalise same-sex marriage. The Catholic Bishops have also urged Assembly members to vote against the motion. Last year, Assembly members rejected a proposal that same-sex couples should have the right to marry. But the Alliance Party voted in support of the legislation.

Following the announcement of the Presbyterian Church regarding David Ford comments were posted on social media.

The Corrymeela Community - Corrymeela seeks to stand with those on the margins. We honour David Ford who, because of his faith and societal convictions, stood with those on the

margins who called for equal marriage for LGBT persons.

We honour his faith and his courage to speak, and we stand with him, now that he is bearing the consequences of speaking.

Inclusion and Diversity are blessings for our communities. Let us join together in initiatives that work for deep and meaningful inclusion and diversity.

Michael Long - As a Presbyterian and a Christian, I would like to make it clear that the tawdry treatment of my friend David Ford is certainly not done in my name.

As someone who knows David well, I know how much is faith means to him and I am utterly disappointed at the way he has been treated because elders in his congregation were unable to work with him because of his views on gay marriage.

There was recognition that David is still an elder in good standing as his views are not in conflict with being a member of the Presbyterian church and I think the real question has to be how

people who refuse to work with someone with different views can continue in their role whilst David has been excluded.

A very sorry example to the wider community.

Peter Osborne - Not a good message re tolerance, equality, grace & empathy: Ford removed from Church role over gay marriage stance

Anne Odling-Smee - How christianity demeans itself by this judgemental behavior. I feel for david and his family when he has expended so much time and energy to serving the people of NI. What an atmosphere in which to worship. May he find peace and fellowship elsewhere.

Andrew Muir - Humbled, saddened and grateful for the personal sacrifices made by David Ford in support of Equal Marriage. Just wish others would show the same love, compassion and grace.

Media reports

Moderator backs David Ford church ruling over gay marriage support

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/moderator-backs-david-ford-church-ruling-over-gay-marriage-support-35142547.html>

Ford: Losing church role for gay marriage support a matter of great sadness

Belfast Telegraph

http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/ford-losing-church-role-for-gay-marriage-support-a-matter-of-great-sadness-35142547.html?utm_source=ipad_share&utm_medium=ipad_app&utm_campaign=clickbacks

Presbyterian Church ousts David Ford over gay marriage stance

News Letter

Alliance MLA David Ford has been removed as an elder of the Presbyterian congregation where he has held the role for almost three decades after he publicly spoke out in favour of gay marriage.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/presbyterian-church-ousts-david-ford-from-elder-post-over-gay-marriage-stance-1-7634237>

David Ford removed from Church role over gay marriage stance

BBC News

Alliance MLA David Ford is removed from his role as an elder in the Presbyterian Church after he spoke out in support of gay marriage.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-37691854>

Church treatment of gay community like pro-slavery attitudes, former C of I archbishop

Most Rev Walton Empey, a former Archbishop of Dublin, in a letter published in this week's Church of Ireland Gazette, comments on same-sex marriage.

Bishop Empty writes, "Recently, my wife and I attended a humanist wedding between two young women, one of whom is a family friend.

"My daughter was a witness for this friend and injected the only piece of religion in the ceremony by reading a few verses from the Epistles. My granddaughter was a ring bearer.

"I do not know whether or not the two lovely young women would have liked to have been married in church but in any event they had no choice.

"As it happens, they are both from Roman Catholic families but they would have been in the very same position if they were members of my own beloved Church of Ireland.

“I felt that it was so very sad that because of their particular orientation neither Church would reach out and provide for them on the most important day of their lives. They, too, are God’s children.

“As I drove home I wondered whether in 50 years’ time Christians would look back at the Church’s attitude to the gay community much in the same way that we look back on attitudes to slavery, or even in more modern times, to our treatment of single mothers and their children.

“It is all so sad and we can be so wrong, as I believe we are in this matter.”

Ex-Church of Ireland lay worker admits to abusing 14 boys over 39-year period

A former Church of Ireland lay worker has pleaded guilty to abusing 14 young boys at various dates and locations over the past five decades, Breaking News.ie reports.

Patrick O'Brien of Knocklyon Road, Templeogue in Dublin used to work as a volunteer at St Patrick's Cathedral.

Four of Patrick O'Brien's victims were in court on Tuesday morning as it took the registrar half an hour to put all the charges to their abuser.

The abuse began in 1974 and continued until 2013.

Mr O'Brien used to volunteer at St. Patrick's Cathedral and some of the abuse took place there as well as other locations in Dublin and the Midlands.

The court heard the 76-year-old used to take the boys away on trips and would abuse them in his car, office or on his boat.

One victim described being abused at a wooded area near Athy, Co. Kildare when he was just nine years old.

He said he kept reassuring him that everything was okay and that he was a "good, brave boy".

He told Gardaí he didn't tell his parents because he was scared and confused and afraid of upsetting them.

He said there was no change in Mr O'Brien's manner afterwards and this made him feel that what happened in the woods was normal.

His sentence hearing continues.

Cairnshill Methodist church re-opens after arson attack



Lusty singing from the President, the Rev Bill Mullally, and the Cairnshill minister, the Rev Louise Donald

Sunday 16 October was a momentous day for Cairnshill Methodist church as it was the first day



A packed church for the evening service

back in the newly refurbished church building following an arson attack earlier on in the year. It also coincided with the 20th anniversary of the setting up of Cairnshill and it was as well a harvest celebration. The President, the Rev Bill Mullally, was the speaker at both morning and evening services. The services were led by the Cairnshill minister, the Rev Louise Donald, who paid warm tribute to all those who had worked so hard to get the building ready for the service (just a few days before it resembled a building

site!) and particularly to the Property Steward, Richard Smyth.

Music was provided by the Cairnshill Praise group under the able and enthusiastic leadership of Flo Johnston. In the evening the congregation was augmented by members of Saintfield Road Presbyterian, Knockbreda Parish and Belvoir Methodist (who had kindly been hosting Cairnshill for the period of the refurbishment).

In the morning, the President preached on the parable of the man who wanted to build bigger barns, telling us that not only did he die physically, but before his death he had let something inside him die – he had failed to look beyond himself and he had failed to look beyond the present world.

In the evening, referring to Acts 2, Bill said that the first witnesses were empowered by the Holy Spirit and, for us to be effective witnesses, we had to have loving fellowship, compassionate service and a bold proclamation of the Gospel. A sandwich lunch was provided after the morning service and tea and biscuits after the evening service – there were plenty of opportunities to catch up with former colleagues, such as the Rev

David Clements, who was the first minister in Cairnshill.

Sacred Trail feature of Derry's International Choral Festival

The internationally-acclaimed chamber choir, Codetta, will perform at Christ Church Londonderry this weekend at the parish's Sunday morning service. Codetta is one of a number of ensembles which are taking part in this year's City of Derry International Choral Festival.

The five-day festival is described as "a joyous celebration of choral music-making", and provides opportunities for competitive and non-competitive participation for singers in a variety of styles. The festival includes a 'Sacred Trail' on Sunday 23rd October, in which choirs will perform at various churches across the city, including Christ Church at 11am.

Codetta was formed in 2001. All its members are originally from Londonderry although they now live, work and study in towns and cities throughout Ireland, the UK and Europe. The ensemble's wide-ranging repertoire is prepared at intensive weekend rehearsals held monthly



***The internationally-acclaimed chamber choir,
Codetta,***

throughout the year. The choir makes regular appearances on both radio and television, including the BBC Proms.

The International Choral Festival is an initiative of the City of Derry Civic Choirs, supported by Walled City Music. The festival is already establishing itself on the global calendar of international choral festivals.

Mosul: Christian Aid prepares to respond to humanitarian disaster

As the military operation to retake the Iraqi city of Mosul from ISIL begins, Christian Aid and other aid agencies are preparing for a humanitarian disaster that could push tens of thousands of people from their homes.

Up to 1.5 million people could be affected by military operations in Mosul, Iraq's second largest city. The UN has said it could be the single most complex humanitarian operation in the world today.

Civilians will be at extreme risk during the military campaign; the UN warns that they could be caught in the cross-fire and used as human shields, while tens of thousands of people may be forcibly expelled, trapped between fighting lines and held under siege.

More than 100,000 people were displaced from Mosul and surrounding areas earlier this year as Iraqi forces cleared the territory ahead of the critical battle. They join around half-a-million people who fled the city in June 2014, after a

week of heaving fighting, when ISIL gained control of Mosul.

Frances Guy, Christian Aid's Head of Middle East Region, said: "Although the assault on Mosul has been long anticipated, it will be very difficult to help all those in need due to the sheer numbers of people affected and the fact that the surrounding area has already received large numbers of people displaced by earlier fighting."

Ms Guy added: "Christian Aid has been providing humanitarian aid to those already displaced from Mosul and Fallujah: delivering food, clothing, blankets and hygiene items as well as cash transfers.

"Our local partners in the region are ready to respond in a number of locations where people are expected to seek refuge as the Mosul offensive gathers pace. We have sent funds to prepare food distributions for more than 50,000 people and will continue to scale up our work to meet the humanitarian needs of those displaced by the conflict in Mosul."

Nearly 3.5 million people in Iraq have had to leave their homes in the last few years because

of conflict and many more are in need of basic support. In the last two years Christian Aid has reached more than 225,000 people, with food, clothes, hygiene kits, health services and cash assistance.

To find out more or to donate to the Christian Aid Iraq appeal please visit the [website](#)

News briefs

+++ Choir members' Queen's Award for Voluntary Service - congratulations to Holy Trinity Portrush choir members Annie Hamill & Kay Hutchinson who recently received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (to the NI Hospice).

+++ Belfast Canon - The Rev Mark Niblock, Dean's Vicar at St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, has been appointed a Canon of the Cathedral by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy. Mark, who was formerly Priest-in-Charge of St Colmgall's, Rathcoole Parish, Diocese of Connor, was nominated Canon Treasurer by the Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev John Mann. He succeeds the Rev Canon Denise Acheson who is taking up a new post at Lisburn Cathedral.

Mark is married to Cherry and is father to two boys. A native of Bangor, he is a former student of Bangor Grammar School. He read Theology at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, and after graduation worked for James Brown and Sons Funeral Directors from 1999 to 2006. Before he was ordained, Mark studied for a Master's degree in Christian Spirituality at Milltown Institute, Dublin. Mark was curate assistant in Agherton Parish, Portstewart, from his ordination in June 2008 until his move to St Comgall's, Rathcoole, in May 2012. He was appointed Dean's Vicar at St Anne's Cathedral in April this year.

Mark will be installed as a Canon of the Cathedral at 3.30pm on January 8 2017. The Rev Gareth Harron, rector of Holywood Parish, will be installed as a Canon at the same service, having been appointed in September by the Bishop of Down and Dromore, the Rt Rev Harold Miller.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Christian Today

Report about the meeting yesterday at Lambeth Palace between the Archbishop of Canterbury and his Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. (see above). Archbishop Justin welcomed Patriarch Kirill and his delegation to Lambeth Palace for a private visit. Before arriving at Lambeth Palace, Patriarch Kirill had an audience with the Queen at Buckingham Palace at which Archbishop Justin and the Bishop of London were present.

Times

Report that the former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Carey could face “explicit criticism” by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) over how he dealt with the Bishop Peter Ball case. Professor Jay, IICSA chair, made the comment in her ruling, published on the IICSA website, to allow Lord Carey core participant status. Peter Ball, a former Bishop of Gloucester, was jailed last year for sex offences against young men and misconduct in public office. In the ruling, Professor Jay said: “The inquiry will consider the extent to which any failings identified in relation to the diocese of Chichester and Peter Ball are representative of wider failings within the Church of England and/or the Anglican Church in general, and the nature and extent of

any failings of institutions to protect children from abuse. It is possible that Lord Carey, in his capacity as former Archbishop of Canterbury, may be subject to explicit criticism by the inquiry in due course.”

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/former-archbishop-faces-criticism-over-paedophile-qwz5hprhp>

Guard/Spectator/Times/Ind/Mail

Reports on yesterday's Home Affairs Select Committee, which quizzed Prof Alexis Jay, chair of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, IICSA, along with other Panel members on IICSA's progress and the resignation of previous chair Justice Goddard. The CofE is one of the national institutions to be scrutinized by the Inquiry.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/oct/18/child-abuse-inquiry-insider-told-home-office-lowell-goddard-concerns-april>

<http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2016/10/home-offices-dirty-laundry-aired-select-committee-child-sexual-abuse-inquiry/>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/tensions-on-child-sex-inquiry-team-had-to-be-eased-by-outsider-3lrnfw00r>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/child-abuse-inquiry-dame-lowell-goddard-alexis-jay-mps-a7367871.html>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3846018/Child-abuse-inquiry-s-FOURTH-chairman-scales-scope-inquiry.html>

Ind/Tel/Mail/Exp/Guard/Premier

Further reports that the Simplification Task Group is considering changing the Canon Law that requires churches to hold services on Sunday. A paper posted on the Church of England's website reveals that the group is considering changes to Canons B11 and B14 'to relax the requirements for regular worship in parish churches in sparsely-populated benefices'. The Bishop of Willesden, Pete Broadbent, chair of the Task Group, is quoted in the Telegraph saying: 'In rural parishes, no vicar can actually get around all their parishes so technically, they are breaking the law. All we are doing is putting the law in line with what already happens.' The *Guardian* investigates how the change would affect vicars working in rural multi-parish groups.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/church-of-england-laws-end-sunday-services-vicars-archbishops-a7367226.html>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/18/church-of-england-considers-abandoning-requirement-for-sunday-se/>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3847828/Church-England-scrap-legal-requirement-hold-weekly-Sunday-services.html>

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/722388/Church-Sunday-service-Christianity-decline-congregation-parish>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/shortcuts/2016/oct/18/should-small-churches-scrap-their-sunday-service>

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Church-of-England-could-abandon-compulsory-Sunday-services>

Premier

Reports that church-goers across the UK are being encouraged to help stop their clergy from suffering burnout or feeling isolated. Throwing a tea party, cleaning their car or offering to babysit are among the suggested ways congregations can get involved with 'Love Your Vicar Week', which runs until Sunday. Claire Walker, chief executive of St Luke's Healthcare for the Clergy, which is organising the initiative, said, "We should never take our pastors or our clergy for granted."

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Thank-Your-Vicar-campaign-targets-clergy-burnout>

Comment

Guardian: Obscurity adds insult to injury

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/oct/18/the-guardian-view-on-the-child-sex-abuse-inquiry-obscurity-adds-insult-to-injury#img-1>

Guardian: Survivors of child abuse deserve the truth from Theresa May

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/oct/18/child-abuse-inquiry-theresa-may-amber-rudd-lowell-goddard>

Letters

Ldn Standard: Refugee Children are welcome here (scroll down) – commending Lord Williams call to welcome unaccompanied refugee children to the UK.

<http://www.standard.co.uk/comment/letters/letters-to-the-editor-remainers-want-the-rules-to-suit-a3372556.html>