



# CNI

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## PRESS WATCH

### **Gerry Adams could learn a lesson in moral courage from the late Bishop Richmond**

**SF leader hasn't guts to tell followers the truth, unlike the Irish-speaking Orangeman, writes Ruth Dudley Edwards in the Belfast Telegraph**

I was about to analyse what Gerry Adams meant by “rights-based issues” — his new favourite buzz phrase — when accidentally I came across an Irish Times obituary of Bishop Henry Richmond and felt impelled to write instead about a man of goodness, decency, generous-spiritedness and moral courage.

Bishop Richmond, who had retired from the Church of England Bishopric of Repton in 1998, died last month at the age of 81.

What seized my attention was that this lifelong Orangeman, a chaplain to two Fermanagh lodges, said his prayers in the Irish language and — a father-of-four — was a supporter of the Lesbian and Gay Christian movement.

I did a bit more delving and learned that, although after his education in Monaghan, Sligo, Enniskillen, Dublin, Strasbourg and Oxford, Henry Richmond would remain in England all his life, his Orange connections at home and the Northern Irish members of his Martyrs Memorial Loyal Orange in Oxford kept him in touch with Ireland.

In 2006 he told William Crawley on BBC Radio Ulster's Sunday Sequence that, at the main Fermanagh Twelfth demonstration in Maguiresbridge, he would be saying "that the Roman Catholic Church of today would, in so many respects, meet the theological ambitions of the Protestant Reformers" and that "the Order should engage directly with the Parades' Commission and with residents' groups".

He would also be asking "his brethren to show an openness to dialogue with those who disagree with them".

And so he did, on the same day that the Rev Ian Paisley was telling the Independent Orange Order in Portrush that “no unionist who is a unionist will go into partnership with IRA/Sinn Fein... and it will be over our dead bodies if they ever get there”. He would be First Minister less than a year later.

Apart from one shout of “rubbish”, the bishop was listened to civilly, and after an interview later on Talkback, one lifelong Orangeman rang in to say he believed a reasonable number of brethren would agree with him.

Bishop Richmond’s commitment to patriotism and Protestantism were never in doubt. When he saw a soldier in uniform: “I go up to him and I shake his hand and thank him for what he’s doing for me and I tell him what a privilege it is for me to see him in his uniform.”

But as he said in a well-informed and thoughtful letter to Fermanagh’s Impartial Reporter in 2009 about the foundation of the dissident-supporting eirigi: “If the politics of Ireland has taught us anything over the past hundred years, it is surely that ‘compromise’ can have an honourable pedigree, and is infinitely better than violence and murder.”

Yet “without simply denigrating the acts of sacrifice and suffering which people believed they were making for political or religious ideals over the past 40 years, how can we bring home to those who approve of these acts that they inflicted an immeasurable amount of sacrifice and suffering, not only on their victims, but also on the communities to which the victims belonged?”

What I particularly admire about the late bishop was that he had the moral courage — as the Irish Times obituary put it — “to tell his brethren what some did not want to hear”.

He urged Christians “to be more accepting of those who were not the same as us or have the same beliefs”.

Which brings me back to Gerry Adams, who has spent a lifetime in public life demonising and denigrating, telling nationalists that they were the Most Oppressed People Ever (MOPE), and encouraging self-pity, anger, hatred and aggression, before adopting new politically-correct jargon to conceal that he and his cabal put party advantage before the well-being of the people of Northern Ireland, and that their newly-discovered “progressiveness” is designed

simultaneously to hoodwink the gullible while winding up traditional Christians.

I haven't space today to look at it in detail, but what Mr Adams means by "rights-based issues" is nothing more nor less than whatever suits the Sinn Fein agenda of the moment.

He isn't fit to wipe the boots of an honest man like the late Henry Richmond.

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Ruth Dudley Edwards' [The Seven: The Lives And Legacies Of The Founding Fathers Of The Irish Republic](#), was published by Oneworld Publications on March 22.

The paperback of Ruth Dudley Edwards' [The Seven: The Lives And Legacies Of The Founding Fathers Of The Irish Republic](#) will be published on April 23.

