

Andrew Carey Editor's Notebook



Irish folk singers challenge C of E on abuse

A challenging and moving video written and sung as a tribute to survivors of clerical abuse in the Church of England by international folk stars of Irish music has been launched and will undoubtedly stir up anger in the Church of England about the way survivors are treated <http://churchofenglandabuse.com>.



The reason for the release is that a victim of alleged abuse, Survivor N, recently attempted to commit suicide here. He is a friend of mine and I have highlighted his plight in the past but have not been able to reveal identities or indeed many of the particulars of the case in order to protect him and this newspaper against legal action. I am told that an article I wrote about this situation partially inspired the song. My article revealed that a legal complaint of clergy abuse filed with a clergy discipline measure, was shockingly leaked by a Bishop to the alleged abuser who then used the correspondence to complain to the police. After

this the survivor tried to commit suicide near his home on the banks of the River Lee in Cork and was only saved when a passing female jogger found him in the reeds.

Musicians for Justice include Liam O Maonlai of the Hothouse Flowers, Steve Cooney, Tommy Sands and others. The song is called Collusion and includes powerful denunciations of the church's scandal management

methods.

Musicians for Justice said: "We continue folk music's ancient tradition of speaking truth to corrupt religious and political power."

Martyn Percy, the former dean of Christchurch who has famously had his own run-ins with the Church of England's safeguarding processes, is supporting the initiative. He said: "Survivors N's experiences are, sadly, typical of

the current leadership of the Church of England. The collusion, coverups, misconduct, incompetence and corruption in safeguarding are well known. The Archbishops do nothing."

He added: "That is why we must all protest, and invite everybody to show solidarity with the abused, and stand apart from the Church of England until such time as it submits, completely, to public standards of justice and truth...then repents, apologises and starts full and proper redress for its victims. Until then, the Church of England remains unsafe, and is in unsafe hands."

The writers of this song are of course well aware of clerical abuse through scandals in the Roman Catholic church in Ireland but in one of the lines they address in straightforward terms their reason for release:

*I do not sing for vengeance,
I do not sing for gain.
I sing that Christianity be
Christian once again.*

Secretary General leaves communion in healthier state

Looking very youthful for his 73 years, Archbishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon held a press conference this week to talk about his seven years as Secretary General of the Anglican Communion which has been marked by growth in the number of provinces from 39 to 42 - including new provinces of South Sudan, Mozambique and Angola, Chile and most recently, Alexandria.

In many ways Josiah has been a pioneer especially in working for Muslim-Christian reconciliation when he was Bishop, then Archbishop of Kaduna Nigeria, in a period where Christians were experiencing increasing persecution and violence which he refused to accept.

This has undoubtedly informed his mission as Secretary-General in which he has placed a huge emphasis on diplomacy and travel during his seven years travelling to many provinces.

"There is no substitute for being with people," he said. He recalled with laughter a visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo: "I thought I was a Head of State."

But it has not all been an easy ride. He said there are some sections of the Communion that need to intensify their work with the five marks of mission, singling out the region of West Africa from where he comes.

But reflecting on the preparation for the Lambeth Conference and then the experience of meeting in Canterbury earlier this Summer he is clearly still walking on cloud nine full of relief at being able to retire and speak his mind, but content also in the belief that the communion is in a healthier place than when he began in 2015.

Mad Net Zero policy

It looks increasingly likely that the rush by western democracies to herd together in search of the unattainable target of Net Zero will seem increasingly like the suicide mission of the Gadarene swine than a sensible policy.

I suspect that moment will come at some point over the next few winters when we witness increasing fuel poverty, winter deaths because of disastrous policies which have encouraged companies to fail to exploit alternative sources of energy, including homegrown gas, in favour of Russian supplies.

This is not to say that we should not seek to reduce our carbon footprint but that we should do so in sensible ways which do not lead to intolerable suffering and poverty.

Bridge builder failed to span the divide

As a bridge builder, Josiah Idowu-Fearon is understandably disappointed that he has not been able to rebuild relationships with Nigeria, Rwanda and Uganda, the provinces whose bishops refused to attend the Lambeth Conference in 2008 and again in 2022. His frustration is detectable and he clearly believes that the bishops of these provinces have not been allowed to make up their own minds, assigning responsibility to the Primates for controlling the flow of information into their provinces and in some cases restricting the flow of visitors from the Anglican Communion. On the subject of same sex relationships, he repeats the Archbishop of Canterbury's position that the teaching from Lambeth 1998 has not changed, but some provinces have moved on. There is nothing that can be



done about this, he explains pointing to the fact that Resolution 1.10 of Lambeth 1998 did not mention discipline or sanctions of provinces. This explanation will appear weak to many across the communion but it does suggest that the narrative and direction of the communion is now set with an official pretence that teaching on marriage is a

non-salvation issue (adiaphora).

I suspect though that this position is not settled and will experience push-back. It is clear also that the liberal churches of the communion have taken this new settlement as an express determination that their progressive view of marriage is equally accepted in the Anglican Communion.

At a time of great change and tumult in the church, stay rooted in faithful mission and teaching with *The Church of England Newspaper*

The Church of England Newspaper



churchnewspaper.com



cen@churchnewspaper.com



facebook.com/CENewspaper



@churchnewspaper

