



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Support for Ian Paisley's criticism of the Roman Catholic media



Dr. Ian Paisley

At the end of August, Dr. Paisley criticised the press for its exaggerated statements regarding his health. He blamed "Romanists" in the media. This brought some criticism including a letter in the Belfast Telegraph from a man who believed that Dr. Paisley should apologise for his remarks. Here is an interesting response to the letter. It appeared in the "Belfast Telegraph" of October 9th.

"COLIN ARMSTRONG (Writeback, October 5) thinks Ian Paisley should apologise for describing some journalists as Romanists.

In fact, Mr Paisley merely hits at the tip of the iceberg. There is hardly a newspaper in southern Ireland which does not have at least one priest or bishop in the traps, not to mention those drafted in from the country on the straight basis of being religious. As one who has worked in journalism and still holds an NUJ card, I can vouch for the following facts:

Almost all Irish papers have, up to recently, a religious columnist (a "father trendy"), invariably from the dominant Roman Catholic Church.

Many agony aunts are ex-nuns.

Many commentators (particularly on ethics) are priests and ex-priests.

Almost all papers have Catholic staff-appointments made on the basis of their religion, or because they are ex-priests or ex-nuns, or their relations are in religious orders.

The universities and colleges of journalism were (and are to some extent) run by ex-priests or their seconds.

Similarly, RTE is governed by a large religious input, not just from top and middle-management but from rent-a-crowd Jesuits, Opus Dei and CORI and spotters after the hide of irreverent people like Dermot Morgan.

(It will be recalled that Dermot Morgan, Father Ted, had to emigrate to England for a living. RTE had carved him up. Why? Because he was the first man to hold up to the Irish people an alternative view of Irish parish priest in all his powerful penitential. Why is it that all Irish religious comedy is enjoyed only in England, and never in Ireland?)

The weekend after Mr Paisley's first comment on Romanist journalists, not less than six people, very close to knowing precisely the truth of what he meant, made fun of his remarks. But not one took his remarks seriously enough to analyse how the Press in the Republic, including commentators on radio and television, is really constituted.

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