



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

New Archbishop of Canterbury: A Pagan Druid?



Dr. and Mrs. Rowan Williams

Archbishop of Canterbury elect, Dr Rowan Williams has hit back at newspaper reports that he is dabbling in paganism. He has been inducted as a 'druid' to the Gorsedd of the Bards, during a ceremony at the National Eisteddfod in St David's, Pembrokeshire. He will join the "mythical" circle of Wales' key cultural contributors in a ritual. An article in *The Times* newspaper suggested it was linked to ancient paganism. But the Archbishop of Wales, who will shortly succeed Dr George Carey at Canterbury, has branded the claims "deeply offensive".

During his welcoming to the group, he donned a long white cloak while druids recited a prayer, trumpets sounded and a 6ft 6ins sword was unsheathed.

But a leading Church of England conservative evangelist expressed concern in *The Times*. "Christian leaders should concentrate on the celebration and promotion of the Christian faith in all its wonder and power rather than dabbling in other things," said Rev David Banting, chairman of the Reform group.

Dr Williams said that the hymns sung at the event were substantially Christian hymns. This begs the question: "What was the nature of the hymns which were not Christian? It would also be interesting to know to whom the "Druids" taking part in his induction were praying? Druidism is the ancient religion of the pagan Celts.

It is most fitting, considering the direction the Church of England has been steering in recent times, that a leader with close links to paganism take over. The road back to Rome will be more easily negotiated with Dr. Williams at the helm!