



## **The Burning Bush - Online article archive**

### **Free Presbyterian minister suggests all Troubles victims should be assessed anonymously and compassionately.....Free Presbyterian moderator responds**

I read this morning the following article which appeared on the website of the Belfast Newsletter of September 29th, 2019. I am sure that I am not the only Christian utterly bemused and dismayed at what Rev McIlveen is reported as saying.

I wish to state that compensation for those who were injured as a result of their own terrorist actions and the families of the same SHOULD NOT be offered compensation!

I say that on the basis of the teaching of the Bible which is the ONLY rule of faith and practice for the child of God!

The Bible says very plainly that: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting," Galatians 6:7-8.

Compensating those who brought injury upon themselves by their wickedness and misery upon their families, flies in the face of this statement!

This truth was further impressed upon my heart from my Bible reading this morning in 1 Kings 2. In verses 31-34 we read the words of Solomon to his army leader, Benaiah, regarding the former army commander, Joab. Solomon sentences him to death with these words:

"And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father. And the LORD shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing thereof, to wit, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah. Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever: but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the LORD. So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him: and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness."

It is to be noted that the sins of this man brought God's judgment upon his descendants as well as himself! That is a rejected truth today but nevertheless in the providence of God His decree stands!

Furthermore, in today's society there is nothing more abused than the system of benefits. Lies are all too commonly employed in the making of claims. The most undeserving obtain that to which they have no claim in truth.

Any system of compensation for those who suffered self-inflicted injuries as a result of their terrorist activity, must surely see claims being made of a most fraudulent kind! Those who engaged in terrorism would have little difficulty telling lies to obtain cash to which, in truth, they have no right!

Ivan Foster, 30th September 2019.

### **Free Presbyterian minister suggests all Troubles victims should be assessed anonymously and compassionately**

A prominent Free Presbyterian minister has suggested all victims of the Troubles – including perpetrators – should be assessed anonymously in terms of compensation.

Rev David McIlveen told BBC's Sunday Sequence programme: "If someone is in need I believe they should



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be considered in a compassionate way.”



**Rev David McIlveen spoke to BBC Sunday Sequence programme and shared his views on compensation for Troubles victims**

He said: “There are many people suffering as a result of the Troubles and we can’t diminish that, but at the same time, we can’t live in the past. “We’ve got to move on and we’ve got to, in some way, compensate and encourage people to do that.

“We have to always appreciate that neither the state nor the church, nor any organisation has an unending reservoir of comfort.

“We can’t provide all the answers to people.”

He continued: “I’m not convinced in my own mind about the pursuit of truth. I just don’t know how one defines that in terms of all the ingredients that might perhaps make up that final solution to that individual.

“Could it be compensation? Could it be more support from the government, from the church? Those are contributing factors.

“And when it comes to compensation, and I know it is a sensitive issue, but I would be of the mind that every individual who has suffered, who has some legacy from the past in terms of their feelings and sensitivities, they should be treated in an anonymous way. And they should be able to present their need in a manner that is personal to them and that that need should be responded to in an individual way.

“I feel that would be much more important in dealing with that difficult issue of compensation for victims.”

Asked if that includes perpetrators he said: “If there is anonymity then it would certainly bring them on board though we wouldn’t know anything about that if it was in an anonymous way.

“I certainly would not condone the actions of violent or murderous people.

“I would suggest there would be very few who would be in the category that would be viewed suspect in the minds of many from the public, but we do need to pass on into a different period and I would pray most earnestly that we would be able to do that sooner rather than later.”

He added: “Every person would have to be assessed accordingly and if they’ve got needs, whatever those needs are, the response would be according to the measurement of their need.

“It wouldn’t be the classification of perpetrator or the classification of the innocent.

“It would be the classification of those who have specific needs – that would be the criteria.”

### **Free Presbyterian moderator says McIlveen victims remarks not church policy**

The moderator of the Free Presbyterian Church has criticised remarks made by a prominent minister who suggested all victims of the Troubles – including perpetrators – should be assessed anonymously in terms of compensation.

Rev David McIlveen sparked controversy after he told the BBC Sunday Sequence programme he would not necessarily object to compensation for ex-paramilitaries who needed support.

While he stressed he “would not condone the actions of violent or murderous people”, Rev McIlveen added that every person should be assessed anonymously and “according to their specific needs”.

“It wouldn’t be the classification of perpetrator or the classification of the innocent,” he said.



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"It would be the classification of those who have specific needs – that would be the criteria."



**Rev Gordon Dane said Rev David McIlveen's remarks had caused 'a lot of anger'**

But moderator Rev Gordon Dane, minister in Crossgar, said Rev McIlveen "does not speak for the church on these matters nor is he as spokesman for the church on any matter".

He told the News Letter: "I was very surprised by these comments, as I don't think it would be the attitude of the membership of church. While I can't speak officially on behalf of the Presbytery, from my experience these views are certainly not reflective of the church as a whole."

Rev Dane said he fundamentally disagreed with the remarks, which he claimed had caused "a lot of anger".

He added: "I just don't understand where he is coming from. I can't see how a perpetrator should be allowed to have compensation when

they were responsible for these acts in the first place."

Meanwhile, Innocent Victims United spokesman Kenny Donaldson has also criticised Rev McIlveen's comments, claiming the argument that perpetrators should be eligible for the proposed pension "is morally defunct and must cease to be given validity".