

Knights of Saint Columba

Accrington Council 188

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Source Christian Institute

The Archbishop of Canterbury has made the astonishing admission that he does not care if vicars leave the Anglican church to become Roman Catholic priests.

In an interview with the Spectator magazine, Justin Welby was asked about a range of issues affecting the Church of England, including declining attendances.

He dismissed this, claimed the decline is “flattening”, and was similarly dismissive of the number of clergy deserting the Church of England’s ranks.

‘How wonderful!’

When asked what he thought about the issue, he responded: “Who cares?”

“I don’t mind about all that. Particularly if people go to Rome, which is such a source of inspiration.

“I had an email from a very old friend, and Anglican priest who has decided to go to Rome. I wrote back saying: how wonderful! As long as you are following your vocation, you are following Christ.”

Pope Francis

He continued: “It’s just wonderful. What we need is for people to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

“I don’t really care whether it’s the Church of England or Rome or the Orthodox or Pentecostals or the Lutherans or Baptists. They are faithful disciples of Christ.”

Welby has met with Pope Francis on a number of occasions. He said he asks questions, and finds the leader of the Roman Catholic Church “very helpful”.

His spiritual advisor is also a Roman Catholic priest, Nicolas Buttet.

‘In trouble’

The Christian Institute’s Director Colin Hart said: “Archbishop Welby seems indifferent as to whether someone is a Roman Catholic or a Protestant.

“But there are major differences in doctrine between the Thirty Nine Articles and Roman Catholic belief.

“These differences mattered to men like Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer who died for their faith. And they should matter to us today.”

Positive Christian engagement

The Archbishop did however speak positively about the role of Christians in society.

His interviewer suggested social action did not really count as religious activity, to which Welby responded: “Feeding the poor? I think Jesus would have thought of it as a form of religious activity.”

He was also accused of being “too political” for quoting Bible verses at the Trades Union Congress Conference.

He replied: “So the Bible’s only safe within church? That’s a very striking idea. That’s quite radical, I’d have said. Shall we just lock Christianity away?”

Bernard Holden MBE JP

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