

# **THE BISHOP BELL CONTROVERSY**

**A COMPENDIUM OF SELECTED  
SOURCES COVERING  
THE PERIOD**

**22 OCTOBER 2015 - 21 JUNE 2016**

Prepared for general use  
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ON 22 OCTOBER 2015 the Media Centre of the Church of England released a statement relating to allegations of sexual abuse made against the former Bishop of Chichester, George Bell (1883-1958). This was immediately given extensive treatment by three newspapers: the *Guardian*, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Times*.

This collection provides a picture of how the controversy emerged and developed in the public sphere in the following months. It shows how the debate has become a national one and how, in the eyes of many of the participants, it has come to raise fundamental questions about the practices of the Church of England in an important area of public justice today.

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## SOURCE 1

PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND MEDIA CENTRE, 22 OCTOBER 2015

### *Statement on the Rt. Revd George Bell (1883 -1958)*

The Bishop of Chichester has issued a formal apology following the settlement of a legal civil claim regarding sexual abuse against the Right Reverend George Bell, who was Bishop of Chichester from 1929 until his death on 3rd October 1958.

The allegations against Bell date from the late 1940s and early 1950s and concern allegations of sexual offences against an individual who was at the time a young child.

Following settlement of the claim the serving Bishop of Chichester, the Right Reverend Dr. Martin Warner, wrote to the survivor formally apologising and expressing his “deep sorrow” acknowledging that “the abuse of children is a criminal act and a devastating betrayal of trust that should never occur in any situation, particularly the church.”

Bishop Warner paid tribute to the survivor’s courage in coming forward to report the abuse and notes that “along with my colleagues throughout the church, I am committed to ensuring that the past is handled with honesty and transparency.”

Tracey Emmott, the solicitor for the survivor, today issued the following statement on behalf of her client:

“The new culture of openness in the Church of England is genuinely refreshing and seems to represent a proper recognition of the dark secrets of its past, many of which may still not have come to light. While my client is glad this case is over, they remain bitter that their 1995 complaint was not properly listened to or dealt with until my client made contact with Archbishop Justin Welby’s office in 2013. That failure to respond properly was very damaging, and combined with the abuse that was suffered has had a profound effect on my client’s life. For my client, the compensation finally received does not change anything. How could any amount of money possibly compensate for childhood abuse? However, my client recognises that it represents a token of apology. What mattered to my client most and has brought more closure than anything was the personal letter my client has recently received from the Bishop of Chichester.”

The survivor first reported the abuse to the then Bishop of Chichester, Eric Kemp, in August 1995. Bishop Kemp responded to the correspondence offering pastoral support but did not refer the matter to the police or, so far as is known, investigate the matter further. It was not until contact with Lambeth Palace in 2013 that the survivor was put in touch with the safeguarding team at the Diocese of Chichester who referred the matter to the police and offered personal support and counselling to the survivor.

In his letter to the survivor Bishop Warner acknowledges that the response from the Diocese of Chichester in 1995, when the survivor first came forward, “fell a long way short, not just of what is expected now, but of what we now appreciate you should have had a right to expect then.”

In accordance with the recommendations of the Church Commissaries' report into the Diocese of Chichester in 2012 the settlement does not impose any form of "confidentiality agreement" restriction regarding public disclosure upon the individual. In this case the survivor has expressed the desire to remain anonymous.

Following a meeting between the survivor and Sussex police in 2013, it was confirmed by the police that the information obtained from their enquiries would have justified, had he still been alive, Bishop Bell's arrest and interview, on suspicion of serious sexual offences, followed by release on bail, further enquiries and the subsequent submission of a police report to the CPS.

A formal claim for compensation was submitted in April 2014 and was settled in late September of this year. The settlement followed a thorough pre-litigation process during which further investigations into the claim took place including the commissioning of expert independent reports. None of those reports found any reason to doubt the veracity of the claim.

The Church of England takes any allegations of abuse very seriously and is committed to being a safe place for all. Any survivors or those with information about church-related abuse must always feel free to come forward knowing that they will be listened to in confidence.

Should anyone have further information or need to discuss the personal impact of this news the Church has worked with the NSPCC to set up a confidential helpline no. 0800 389 5344.

**ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

A copy of this statement can be found on the Church of England website and the Diocese of Chichester website.

### **SOURCE 2**

'Revered Bishop Bell was a Paedophile – Church of England', article in the *Daily Telegraph*, 22 October 2015

A former Church of England bishop revered as a peacemaker – and granted the closest thing Anglicanism has to a saint's day – was a paedophile, the Church has acknowledged.

George Bell, who was bishop of Chichester for 30 years until his death in 1958, sexually assaulted a child, who is still alive, in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

The Church of England has issued a formal apology to the victim, who wishes to remain anonymous and has asked even for their gender not to be disclosed, and settled a legal claim for compensation.

The victim first came forward in 1995 but the complaint was effectively ignored by the then Bishop of Chichester, Eric Kemp, who died in 2009.

It was not until the victim contacted the office of the current Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev Justin Welby, two years ago that the allegations were finally investigated properly.

Bell is the second bishop from the Diocese of Chichester to have been acknowledged as a sexual predator, just over two weeks after Peter Ball, the former Bishop of Lewes, was jailed for abusing 19 young men.

The Church of England, working with the NSPCC, has set up a confidential helpline for anyone affected by the news and has urged other victims of anyone with information of historic clerical abuse to come forward in confidence.

Bell is revered for his role as a crucial ally of the German underground resistance movement under the Nazis and later as a peacemaker between the two countries as well as a pioneer of the ecumenical movement.

He was a close friend of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the heroic German theologian who was executed for his association with a plot to assassinate Hitler, who is commemorated above the door of Westminster Abbey among a line-up of “modern saints”.

He also counted Gandhi and Nehru among his friends and helped lay the foundations for the thaw in relations between Anglicans and Roman Catholics before Second Vatican Council, with close contacts including Cardinal Giovanni Montini, who later became Pope Paul VI.

It is widely thought he would have been made Archbishop of Canterbury following the death of William Temple in 1944 but for his public denunciation of Allied bombing of Dresden.

In 2008, the then Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams said it “would have been a good thing” if Bell had been given the role.

He has an annual commemoration, the Anglican equivalent of a feast day, on October 3, the anniversary of his death.

A spokesman for the Church said it would now be up to the General Synod to formally remove him from the calendar of commemorations but signalled he is unlikely ever to be commemorated again.

Although Bell could not be questioned having died almost 60 years ago, the Church said it had investigated the victim’s allegations ahead of what would have been a civil case and accepted their account as being true on the balance of probabilities.

It is the latest in a long line of sexual abuse cases centred on the Diocese of Chichester to come to light.

The current Bishop of Chichester, Dr Martin Warner, has written to the victim to express his “deep sorrow”.

“The abuse of children is a criminal act and a devastating betrayal of trust that should never occur in any situation, particularly the church,” he said

Tracey Emmott, the victim's lawyer, said: "While my client is glad this case is over, they remain bitter that their 1995 complaint was not properly listened to or dealt with until my client made contact with Archbishop Justin Welby's office in 2013.

"That failure to respond properly was very damaging, and combined with the abuse that was suffered has had a profound effect on my client's life.

"For my client, the compensation finally received does not change anything.

"How could any amount of money possibly compensate for childhood abuse?"

"However, my client recognises that it represents a token of apology.

"What mattered to my client most and has brought more closure than anything was the personal letter my client has recently received from the Bishop of Chichester."

She added: "The new culture of openness in the Church of England is genuinely refreshing and seems to represent a proper recognition of the dark secrets of its past, many of which may still not have come to light."

A spokesman for the Church of England added: "The immediate challenge is to come to terms with the shock of this, feel the deep shame of it and express profound apologies to the survivor.

"Whether the name should be formally removed [from the calendar of commemorations] is an issue for another day and involves a full Synodical process.

"But the present inclusion in the Church's calendar requires no one to mark the day and in the light of this news it will be up individual clergy and parishes whether they wish to continue to do so."

A spokeswoman for the NSPCC said: "Every child abuse survivor must feel confident that, when they speak out, they will be taken seriously.

"The Church made a grave error in not reporting this crime to the police immediately, and we hope that lessons will be learned from this matter.

"It is crucial that children get the right level of protection from those who use the church as a cloak to hide their dark crimes."

### **SOURCE 3**

'The rule of the lynch mob', article in the *Church of England Newspaper*, 28 October 2015.

Well let's get it out of the way. All child abuse is wrong and horrible. All claims of child abuse should be investigated properly and the offenders, if found to be guilty in a court of law, should be flung into prison for a very, very long time.

So now we've done the formalities. There is much discontent with the Church of England's behaviour over the way it has handled abuse allegations against one of its greatest sons, George

Bell – a great ecumenist, liturgist, wartime leader and friend to Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Confessing Church.

It was announced last week that a legal civil claim has been settled by the Diocese of Chichester regarding sexual abuse claims against Bishop Bell. The allegation was first made in 1995 and was not reported to the police. The case was reopened in 2013 and now an unknown sum of money has been handed over.

But why on earth is the Church of England traducing the reputation of one of its greatest wartime spiritual leaders on the basis of recent allegations about the events of 65 years ago? We talk about cases of historic abuse in reference to Jimmy Savile crimes during the 60s, 70s and 80s, but this case is truly prehistoric.

Bishop Bell died in 1958 and the crimes of abuse he is alleged to have committed against a young child date from the late 40s and early 50s when the Bishop himself was in his late 60s and early 70s.

He is effectively being tried and convicted by the Church of England with little thought for proper justice and due process.

“We are all diminished by what we are being told,” said the modern Bishop of Chichester. He goes on to explain: “Our starting point is response to the survivor. We remain committed to listening to all allegations of abuse with an open mind. In this case, the scrutiny of the allegation has been thorough, objective and undertaken by people who command the respect of all parties.

“We face with shame a story of abuse of a child; we also know that the burden of not being heard has made the experience so much worse. We apologise for the failures of the past.”

And here much of the problem lies. The starting point must be justice, not just a concern for the ‘survivor’, because that is to jump to conclusions. The Bishop, and the independent assessors, have missed out a vital part of the process of justice that is that the accused is presumed innocent and has the right to defend themselves.

The indecent haste to describe Bishop George Bell as an abuser is a failure of nerve on the part of the Church of England. The diocese of Chichester may have failed to respond properly when the allegation of abuse was first reported in 1995, and although the accuser was offered pastoral support, this should not lead to any sort of admission of guilt on behalf of George Bell.

There is hysteria and a lynch-mob mentality surrounding some of the cases of historic abuse. We have seen this in the false allegations of murder, rape and ritual abuse made against politicians such as Ted Heath, Leon Brittan and Harvey Proctor. The Church is now as much a part of this overreaction as any other part of society.

Of course there are historic cases of abuse, and there was a long period of time when child protection procedures were unknown and reports of abuse were dealt with poorly. There were cover-ups and failures to believe the victims of abuse. But we’ve had at least two decades of improving things, legislating and regulating to make sure that protections are better, and that children are properly listened to and dealt with.



These improvements should have lessened the sense of hysteria and panic surrounding these cases. Abusers such as Jimmy Savile could never have thrived in today's climate of safeguarding. Yet the case of George Bell proves that we are living in a state of perpetual and rising fears over allegations of child abuse and we in the Church of England have no answers to these fears. In fact, we are complicit in the lynch mob.

Remember the ritual abuse controversy of the 1980s and 1990s in which social workers and police were convinced that Satanists were involved in the mass killing and abuse of children. And there was no evidence at all in the end.

Remember also the mob that surrounded the home of a paediatrician. The witch-hunt is back and no prominent person is safe from being named – alive or dead. And if named their reputation is trashed.

This is the very opposite of the Christian faith that decries fear and says 'judge not, lest ye be judged'.

George Bell, with his reputation for bravery, and his leadership in bringing the victims of Nazism to safety, opposing carpet-bombing of German cities and supporting the martyrs of the Confessing Church, is the type of church leader who would have confronted this lynch mob with calm courage.

There may be a stain on his reputation for a short time but his memory will be cherished again in future especially when we look back at this time of witch-hunting with a proper sense of perspective.

#### **SOURCE 4**

'The Church of England's shameful betrayal of Bishop Bell', article by Peter Hitchens in the *Spectator*, 7 November 2015.

The Church of England has produced a lot of good men and women, but very few great ones. It is in its modest, cautious nature that it should be so. Greatness requires a lonely, single-minded strength that does not sit easily with Anglicanism's gentle compromise.

And I suspect the Church has always been hesitant and embarrassed about the one undeniably great figure it produced in the 20th century. To this day, George Bell, Bishop of Chichester from 1929 to 1958, is an uncomfortable, disturbing person, like a grim obelisk set in a bleak landscape. Many British people still disapprove of his lonely public denunciation of Winston Churchill's deliberate bombing of German civilians in their homes. Some still defend the bombing and seek to reconcile it with Christian teaching, which is hard. Others simply refuse to believe, against all evidence, that this is what we did. It is often said, though it cannot be proved, that George Bell would have become Archbishop of Canterbury — a post for which he was well qualified — had he kept his mouth shut.

And perhaps this is why he found so few defenders when, 57 years after his death, Bishop Bell was numbered among the transgressors by his old church, and said to have been a paedophilic abuser.

The church itself issued a public statement which correctly referred to the anonymous accusations against the late Bishop Bell as ‘allegations’, but in all other respects treated the claim as if it were a proven fact. Money had been paid in compensation. The current Bishop of Chichester, Dr Martin Warner, was said to have written to ‘the survivor’, apologising. He explained, ‘I am committed to ensuring that the past is handled with honesty and transparency.’ There were ‘expert independent reports’ (which have not been published). None ‘found any reason to doubt the veracity of the claim’.

The Sussex police, meanwhile, ‘confirmed’ that the information obtained from their inquiries would have led to Bishop Bell’s arrest, had he not been dead. Who can doubt this, given modern police forces’ strong interest in investigating such allegations against prominent people? But it merely draws attention to the long delay between the alleged offence and accusation. Had the bishop survived until the first allegation was made in 1995, he would have been 112 years old. As it turned out, he had been dead for 37 years, which is perhaps why the church did little at the time, and the police were not called to arrest and interrogate the bishop’s bones. The charges go even further back, and refer to alleged events in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

The church’s document on the affair was available online and quickly found its way to the desks of several newspaper correspondents. Unqualified headlines resulted, and stories which proclaimed without reservation that the late bishop ‘was’ a paedophile, and ‘committed’ sexual abuse. ‘Eminent bishop was paedophile, admits church,’ said one. ‘Church’s “deep sorrow” over abuse by bishop,’ said another. ‘C of E admits “saintly” bishop abused child,’ said a third. There were plenty of inverted commas on display but none were placed around the accusation. No doubt this did not distress the Church of England, which has suffered several undoubted (and poorly handled) cases of proven abuse and which is anxious to show that it is now sound and rigorous on this subject.

All this is completely understandable. And yet it fills me with a powerless sense of outrage and injustice. It is perfectly possible that the allegations are true. But this is not some Jimmy Savile affair in which a great cloud of witnesses testify against a person, recently dead, whose life and works do not do very much to undermine the charges against him.

George Bell, among much else to his credit, was one of the first in Britain to see the National Socialist menace. He was the dauntless ally and reliable friend of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He opened his beautiful palace to exiles and handed it over to evacuees during the war. Against the tide of opinion, he pleaded the cause of anti-Nazi refugees in this country who were foolishly rounded up during the invasion panic of 1940.

Such a person may conceivably have been a secret abuser of children. But didn’t this fair, just, brave man (these things *are* proven) deserve the simple justice of the presumption of innocence, and those protections so majestically summed up in the sixth amendment to the US constitution — to be given speedy and public trial by an impartial jury, to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation, to be confronted with witnesses against him, to have compulsory process to obtain witnesses in his favour, and to have the assistance of counsel in his defence?

Well, he cannot have any of these things because he is dead. And he left no descendants to defend his honour. In which case it is surely up to us, not least to those in the church (whose main duty is to uphold the good even if they are reviled for it) to try to provide some sort of justice.

By all means comfort and assuage the accuser, and compensate him or her (we are not even allowed to know the sex of the person involved). But in the absence of a timely, fair trial, did it serve the purposes of justice and goodness to make the matter public? To a secular mind, there is no difficulty in sacrificing the reputation of a dead man for what you think is a good cause. To those who believe in the immortal soul, or say they do, it is surely not quite so simple. As for those journals of record who presented allegations as proven fact, would they have dared treat any living person of such reputation in this way? Surely one of the things my trade most needs to prove is that it can and will act fairly without a judge or a regulator breathing down its neck.

## **SOURCE 5**

His Hon. Alan Pardoe QC, Letter to the *Church Times*, 13 November 2015

Sir, — I refer to the “Statement on the Rt. Rev. George Bell (1883-1958)” issued on 22 October by the Media Centre of the Church of England.

It appears to me to be thoroughly slipshod and muddled in its wording, and appallingly unfair to the reputation of George Bell, who was Bishop of Chichester for 30 years from 1929 until his death in 1958. Before the Second World War, he was the most important ally internationally of the German Confessing Church. Before and during the war, he helped many displaced persons and refugees from Nazism.

Many, including Rowan Williams, have thought he would have made a worthy successor to William Temple as Archbishop in 1944. He was, in short, an immensely courageous, if very controversial, bishop, and a tremendous figure in the Church, and one whose posthumous reputation has stood very high. He died in 1958, and lies in his cathedral in Chichester.

We are informed in the Media Centre’s statement that “The allegations against Bell date from the late 1940s and 50s and concern allegations of sexual offences against an individual who was at the time a young child.” As the Media Centre’s statement does not spell out, in 1995, when these complaints were first made, Bishop George Bell had been dead for nearly 40 years.

The Media Centre’s statement was made in respect of the settlement of a civil claim made by the complainant. We are not told in terms against whom it was made: either the Church of England or the diocese of Chichester. In defending this claim, the Church and the diocese must surely have been aware that it held in its hands the honour of Bishop Bell and of the Church.

From the Media Centre’s statement, the claim appears to have contained a claim in respect of the Church’s allegedly unsatisfactory investigation when the complaint was first made in 1995. That appears to be endorsed by the terms of the apology made by the present Bishop of Chichester quoted by the Media Centre.

The Media Centre’s statement signally fails to make clear whether the present Bishop of Chichester in his apology was also acknowledging Bell’s alleged guilt of sexual abuse of a child. This is astonishing. If the present Bishop was not acknowledging that, but only that the investigation in 1995 was inadequate, that should have been spelt out loud and clear. If he was accepting Bell’s guilt of these horrific matters, that should have been spelt out, and the reasons for so shocking a conclusion plainly stated.

Instead, the Media Centre's statement deals with this obliquely by going on to quote at length a statement made by the solicitor for the complainant (described in the Media Centre's statement as "the survivor"). The solicitor's statement first states that there was "a failure to respond properly" to the complaint in 1995 and that such failure was "very damaging".

The solicitor's statement goes on immediately to state that such failure when "combined with the abuse that was suffered has had a profound effect on my client's life". Does the quotation of this statement constitute an admission by the Church that in the 1940s or 1950s one of its senior bishops committed horrible offences against a child? If so, why is it made in so oblique a fashion? If not, why is this part of the solicitor's statement quoted in the Media Centre's statement?

There is, or ought to be, a chasm between the two accusations that appear to have arisen in this matter:

1. that the investigation in 1995 of the complaint first made then was inadequate; and
2. that George Bell in the 1940s and '50s, when Bishop of Chichester, committed sexual abuse of a young child.

It is clear that the Church has accepted the first of these and has apologised and paid compensation. On the second and hugely serious accusation, the Church's Media Centre's statement is, to put the kindest view of it, appallingly muddled when on so serious a matter it should have been crystal-clear.

As to the evidence on either of these accusations, the Media Centre states only that in the pre-litigation process in respect of the civil claim there was further investigation in which expert independent reports were obtained and that "none of these reports found any reason to doubt the veracity of the claim." These opinions as to the veracity of the complainant are most unlikely to have been admissible in any trial of this claim.

The Media Centre's statement concludes by stating a police opinion in 2013 that if Bishop Bell had been alive the complainant's statement would have justified an arrest of the Bishop "on suspicion of serious sexual offences followed by his release on bail, further enquiries and the subsequent submission of a police report to the CPS" (Crown Prosecution Service).

It would have been helpful if the Media Centre's statement had gone on to state that it would have been for the CPS to decide whether to mount any charge and, if so, what charge, and that there would then have been a trial of such charge before a jury. The recent example of the police treatment of the late Lord Brittan is surely relevant here.

It is understandable that the Church has very properly now fully investigated this matter and that it has apologised for the inadequacy of its investigation in 1995 and has paid compensation for that failure. It is incomprehensible why the Church in its Media Centre's statement has almost casually lent its authority to the utter destruction of the reputation of George Bell, arguably one of the greatest bishops of the Church of England.

ALAN PARDOE

## SOURCE 6

Two letters to the *Church Times*, 20 November 2015

From Dr Brian Hanson [Former Registrar to the Archbishop of Canterbury and Solicitor to General Synod]

Sir, — I am grateful for the letter (13 November) from His Honour Alan Pardoe QC, which eloquently dissects the media statement concerning the Rt Revd George Bell.

The issue was raised obliquely at the recent Chichester diocesan-synod meeting (the story broke too late for inclusion in the agenda), and it was obvious from the reaction to the question that many synod members are unhappy about the way the matter was dealt with — not by the diocese — but at national level.

One deanery synod has now passed a resolution calling upon those responsible for safeguarding within the Church of England to acknowledge that safeguarding policies must be subject to the rule of law, and, in particular, that an accused person has the right to defend themselves when allegations are made against them.

Many of us are uneasy that Bishop Bell's reputation has been destroyed by a media statement that fails to set out the facts of the allegation made more than 30 years after the Bishop's death.

BRIAN HANSON

From the Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and others

Sir, — Like His Honour Alan Pardoe QC, we are disturbed by the recent church media statement over allegations concerning Bishop George Bell.

We are very mindful of the distress that has been experienced by the complainant, and it is particularly regrettable that the complaint made in 1995 was not investigated properly and referred to the appropriate authorities.

The statement is guarded in places, and implies rather than states openly the claim subsequently made in some newspapers about Bell ("George Bell was a paedophile — Church of England"). If it raises concerns about Bell's integrity and humanity as a Christian leader, it must also, surely, raise acute concerns about the degree to which it is possible to establish certitude in cases of alleged crimes in which the perpetrators are long dead.

Some of us have worked extensively on Bell's papers; we are not aware of any evidence there of this side of his character. That is not to say that evidence does not exist elsewhere, of course, but it does prompt our hope that something at least of the "expert independent reports" will be released, appropriately redacted, to demonstrate the strength of evidence to which allusion is made in the statement.

This is all the more important, it seems to us, given the risk of damage spilling over on to the many honourable causes with which Bell was associated. Christian internationalism, criticism of Nazi anti-Semitism, prophetic support for church unity, opposition to saturation bombing, support for the Confessing Church and the German resistance movement — these and other matters were all things on which Bell had courageous and often far-sighted things to say.

From the end of the Second World War, he was an acknowledged leader of the World Council of Churches, and was accorded immense respect and gratitude throughout the international ecumenical movement.

That estimate of him remains to this day, and many people from beyond these shores and in all Christian traditions will, therefore, be watching very closely this present case, and the part played by the Church of England in it.

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## SOURCE 7

Charles Moore in the *Daily Telegraph*, 1 January 2016

On April 8 1945, Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian and anti-Nazi, was condemned to death in Flossenburg concentration camp by an SS judge, without witnesses, defence or records. He was executed the following dawn. On the day of his sentence he sent a message, via a British prisoner, to George Bell, the Bishop of Chichester.

Bonhoeffer regarded Bell as the greatest friend of the German Christian resistance to Hitler (“I feel ashamed when I think of all your goodness”). His message was “Tell him that for me this is the end but also the beginning – with him I believe in the principle of our Universal Christian brotherhood... and that our victory is certain.”

More than 70 years later – last October – the current Bishop of Chichester, Martin Warner, issued a “formal apology” to an unnamed individual who was “at the time [the late 1940s and early 1950s] a young child”, and announced the settlement (with an unspecified sum paid) of “a legal civil claim regarding sexual abuse against the Rt Rev George Bell”. Bishop Warner said “I am committed to ensuring that the past is handled with transparency and honesty.”

Bishop Bell died in 1958. When he was thus condemned 57 years later, he had no witnesses in his defence and, indeed, no defence. There are no published records of the process which condemned him. The decision was made by the “core group” of “safeguarding professionals” and the bishops of the diocese, under the Church of England’s National Safeguarding Team. They decided, not on a level of proof that would satisfy a criminal court, but “on the balance of probabilities”, that Bell had committed the alleged acts. There was no “transparency” about the past: we shall not be told what the alleged acts were, who the “victim” was and what the evidence consisted in.

Bishop Warner’s announcement has disturbed the Diocese of Chichester (in which I live). Bell was our nearest thing to a saint since St Richard of Chichester (died 1253). He was noted for his controversial courage in condemning the Allied bombing of Dresden in the Second World War; for his earlier warnings against appeasement; and for helping Jews and others escape Nazi Germany. He also revived Christian arts: TS Eliot’s play *Murder in the Cathedral*, for example, resulted from Bell’s suggestion. He was universally regarded as a holy man. Five years ago,

his special day was put into the Church calendar for veneration. There are buildings and institutions named after him.

Now Bell is becoming a non-person. Flowers placed on his memorial in the cathedral get removed. George Bell House – “a centre for vocation, education and reconciliation” – will be renamed shortly. Bishop Bell School will probably go the same way. The man described by Ian Kershaw, the leading historian of the Hitler years, as “the most significant English clergyman of the 20th century”, is now being ruined by an anonymous, unpublished claim, upheld by a non-court which won’t explain its decision. At first stunned by the October announcement, many in the diocese and beyond are now angry at this unfair and therefore unChristian manner of proceeding.

Why is the Church behaving in this way? Its public statements about Bell suggest self-protection. The Diocese of Chichester stands accused of mishandling past child-abuse accusations, including the complaint about Bishop Bell, when it first received it in 1995. There have been other cases. The former Bishop of Lewes, Peter Ball, recently went to prison for a series of offences he had earlier denied.

The national Church authorities know they will be one of the subjects of Justice Lowell Goddard’s inquiry into historical child abuse. The diocesan statement proudly quotes the complainant’s solicitor praising the current Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, for pushing this forward, implying a favourable contrast with 1995. The reputation of a bishop long dead seems dispensable compared with the need to get critics off the backs of the present ones – Bell? Ball? Who cares? Let’s get out of this.

To buttress themselves, the Church authorities cited the police in their statement. The police “confirmed... that the information obtained from their inquiries, would have justified, had he still been alive, Bishop Bell’s arrest and interview, on suspicion of serious sexual offences.” The Diocese doesn’t dare say Bell committed a crime, but they want us to think that Plod thinks he did.

I am unimpressed. Time and again, in recent child-abuse inquiries, the police have made grandiose, ill-based claims. They searched Lord Brittan’s house, five weeks after he was dead, on the basis of “evidence” which has now collapsed. One officer, Detective Superintendent Kenny McDonald, described the mad accusations about rape and murder in Dolphin Square as “credible and true”. Another stood outside the late Sir Edward Heath’s house in Salisbury and invited anyone “if you have been a victim” to come forward and denounce the former Prime Minister.

Last year, Field Marshal Lord Bramall (aged 91) was accused, without corroboration, of grotesque acts of abuse, and subjected to a 10-hour police search of his house. Everyone knows the police have found nothing, but they will not admit it and are passing what they have got – or rather what they have not got – to the Crown Prosecution Service, leaving Lord Bramall hanging. Why should one be swayed by the police’s (improper) speculation that they would arrest Bishop Bell if they could? They’ll arrest anyone.

Some may bridle, and say that famous people should not be protected from the work of justice, however painful: “Be you never so high, the law is above you.” Quite right, but the key legal principle – the presumption of innocence – is being set aside.

Besides, as I have had confirmed by several correspondents, entirely unfamous people also suffer when accusations of child abuse start flying around. I shall cite only one, who goes by the alias of David Anderson.

Six years ago, Mr Anderson was accused by Thames Valley police, on the basis of unspecified “intelligence”, of downloading child pornography. He was kept on police bail, renewed 14 times, for two and a half years. Then he was charged. When it came to trial seven months later, the police offered no evidence. He had lost, on his hard drive, all his work as a film-maker. He lost his income too and has lived in a twilight of suspicion since 2009. He still does not know who falsely accused him. He suspects that lodgers, disgruntled about his refusal to connive in benefit fraud, may have planted images on his computer, but the police will give no information. There are probably thousands of people today, unknown to fame, who are similar victims of anonymous and malicious denunciation.

Justice is not guaranteed by passionate feeling against a particular, horrible crime such as child abuse. It depends absolutely on proper process. When public bodies set that process aside, what trust or “transparency” is left? If Bishop Bell had been a Nazi war criminal, the charges against him would have had to reach a far higher standard of proof than those by which the Church of England has destroyed him. The restoration of justice should be its New Year resolution.

## **SOURCE 8**

Letter sent on behalf of the Chapter of Chichester Cathedral to volunteers, 15 January 2015

Dear Cathedral Volunteers

We write with reference to the recent Church of England statement about Bishop George Bell and in particular the way in which this impacts on our welcome to visitors. We recognise that this has raised a series of questions and emotions, and the purpose of this letter is to give you clear guidance in your role as a Cathedral volunteer. This letter is intended primarily for volunteers in public facing roles, i.e. Guides, Doorkeepers, Stewards and Information Desk volunteers. However, we have copied in other teams too, so that you are all aware and fully briefed.

The first thing to say is that, in general terms, the issue of child sexual abuse is clearly high on the national agenda. There are very valid reasons for this, such as recent statistics from the NSPCC telling us that as many as one in twenty in our society suffer sexual abuse as a child. Many of our visitors (and volunteers), therefore, may be painfully affected by this subject. This means it is vital that all of us together should handle this matter with the utmost sensitivity and care.

The Chichester Diocese has a particularly troubling record of historic safeguarding issues and some of those incidents involve the Cathedral. Last year, for example, we published the Carmi Report (available on the news section of the website dated 8 July 2014). The report investigated the Cathedral’s safeguarding practices following the conviction of an offender for child sexual abuse in 2001. Many positive changes have taken place since the time of this offender (who was a prominent member of the Cathedral community and a volunteer) and the provision for safeguarding within the Diocese has developed and expanded enormously. Bishop Martin has also provided strong leadership on this issue and, alongside the Bishop, we are committed to transparency and openness so we might collectively try to rebuild the trust that has been lost along the way.

The scrutiny will continue though, as is only proper. Dame Lowell Goddard QC announced recently that the national Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse will come specifically to Chichester,



precisely because of the history we refer to above. So for this reason too, it is very important that we - all of us together - respond wisely and constructively to the recent challenges regarding Bishop George Bell.

We will turn now towards our guidance for you, as you relate to the Cathedral's visitors. It is no longer appropriate to simply speak of Bishop Bell's achievements, as though the serious allegations against him had not been made. The text below is intended to give you guidance about the most appropriate way of speaking about him to our visitors:

**'George Bell was Bishop of Chichester from 1929 to 1958: he retired shortly before he died. He was one of the first to spot the evils of Nazi Germany in the 1930s, and one of very few to oppose the saturation bombing of German cities in the 1940s. He has come to be regarded as one of the outstanding twentieth century church leaders, and his achievements include pioneering work in the area of Christian unity (he helped found the World Council of Churches), support for refugees, the Church's patronage of the arts, and post-war reconciliation and peace-making.**

**Recently, however (in October 2015), the current Bishop of Chichester, Martin Warner, issued an apology following the settlement of a civil legal claim regarding allegations of the sexual abuse of a child by Bell while he was bishop in this diocese. The reactions to this news have shown that many struggle to accept that someone of great achievement in some areas of life might also act so shamefully in another. Some have doubted the investigative process and the evidence so long after the event, and wanted to examine it themselves, but confidentiality laws do not allow this. Others have felt that the allegations and apology call into question every aspect of Bell's ministry. The importance and impact of his work, including ongoing links between this Cathedral and churches in Germany, remains. We now recognise, however, the likelihood that the same man who showed moral courage in opposing saturation bombing, was also responsible for the devastating abuse of a child.**

**Chichester Cathedral Chapter reiterates its unequivocal support for the right of all who have suffered abuse to be properly heard. In recent years we have taken huge steps forward in our approach to safeguarding – our policies are robust, we are committed to listening to those who have been abused with compassion, and to being open with the wider public. Should you wish to read more about Bishop Bell, including the Church of England statement and the thorough investigative process involved, you can find out more on the Cathedral website (particularly in the 'News' section, dated October 2015).**

This text is intended to give clear guidance on tone and content, but of course this is not an easy subject to communicate. Consequently, if you prefer to leave Bishop Bell out of your conversation or guided tour, this is perfectly acceptable. The Bell memorial will remain in the Cathedral, with its eloquent summary of his wide-ranging ministry. The statement underneath it will now be removed.

If you decide not to speak about Bishop Bell there is hardly a shortage of material for an instructive guided tour, given the long history of the cathedral. To reiterate, however: if you do speak about Bishop Bell, then please make every effort to convey the tone and content as set out above – and remember what we now know about the proportion of people for whom any mention of abuse will be particularly painful. As a community we can contain a wide range of views and reactions, but that is not the same thing as being part of a volunteering team which acts as the public face of the Cathedral. We need to be able to trust our volunteers to be accurate ambassadors for Chapter, particularly on matters as sensitive and significant as this.

For those following the subject, further guidance was published recently by the Chichester Diocese in its Safeguarding Newsletter (including comments on the investigative process, and showing that confidentiality laws apply in all cases of this nature ) available at

[http://safeguarding.chichester.anglican.org/media/documents/document/2016/01/SG\\_Newsletter\\_Winter\\_16.pdf](http://safeguarding.chichester.anglican.org/media/documents/document/2016/01/SG_Newsletter_Winter_16.pdf) .

The final thing to say is that we are very grateful for all you do as a volunteer, and for your help with this particular issue. Along with the wider diocese, we are working very hard to face the safeguarding failures of the past and build a new culture of safety and trust. During 2016 we will work with specialists in the field of safeguarding to further develop the Cathedral's ministry and response to those seeking information and healing following experiences of abuse. We are hugely appreciative of your support in this very important work.

Canon Dr Anthony Cane  
*Chancellor, Chichester Cathedral*

on behalf of Chapter

## **SOURCE 9**

Safeguarding Newsletter, the Diocese of Chichester: 22 January 2016

*Bishop George Bell – points on a complex case*

In October 2015, the Church of England announced that the Bishop of Chichester had issued a formal apology following the settlement of a civil claim regarding sexual abuse against the Right Reverend George Bell.

Bishop Bell had a long and distinguished ministry as bishop of Chichester from 1929 until his death in 1958.

The process leading up to the settlement, the apology and the announcement was long, complex and carried out with all the sensitivity that a case of this nature demands. Given the nature of the allegations and the reputation of Bishop Bell, it is however understandable that questions have been raised since the announcement was made. These have come from members of the church nationally and locally, as well as from the media.

We would like to take this opportunity to try to answer some of these concerns – as best we can. For legal reasons, it has often been impossible to respond to specific questions about the case and we understand this has been frustrating. It is possible however to clarify three broad areas to which the majority of concerns relate.

### **Presumption of Innocence**

In criminal cases, innocence is presumed until guilt is proved and the burden of proof rests entirely on the prosecution. This means that no-one can be subjected to criminal penalties by the state unless their guilt is proved beyond reasonable doubt. The concept is probably familiar to most people, but not well understood. In popular culture the assumption is that this principle applies to all 'legal cases', but in fact it applies to criminal prosecutions only.

The case of Bishop George Bell was a civil and not a criminal case – regardless of the serious nature of the allegations. Bishop Bell has not been denied the ‘presumption of innocence’, because proceedings were never brought before a criminal court. This may seem like a technical point, but it is important that this fundamental legal principle is understood.

Where allegations are made against a deceased person, as is the case with Bishop Bell, they must – of course – be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly, however uncomfortable this may prove, or however high profile the individual may be. The death of the person does not mean that allegations should not or cannot be investigated at all. It only means that a criminal prosecution cannot be pursued.

### **The Evidence was not disclosed**

Many have asked to see the evidence on which the civil case was settled, and many have expressed concern that we have not been able – or seemed willing – to provide it.

The desire for transparency does not sit easily with the requirement for confidentiality. Many vexed questions from local, national and international correspondents have been raised, which is understandable given the international standing of Bishop Bell as a theologian and church leader.

But here we must also consider the courage displayed by any survivor in coming forward. The law rightly affords them protection to safeguard the confidentiality of their deeply personal information.

Time and again we hear from people reporting a

buse about how painful it is for them to disclose their experiences, as reporting involves re-living. We sympathise with those struggling to come to terms with Bishop Bell’s situation. We also understand the desire to see the evidence. However, this cannot outweigh the individual’s right of privacy.

Even if we wanted to reveal the information, we would be unable to do so: the survivor’s privacy is protected in law. It is legally impermissible for the Church to disclose any evidence used in the settlement, or any information that might lead to identification of the complainant. To be absolutely clear: no specific confidentiality agreement has been applied in Bishop Bell’s case; confidentiality laws apply in all cases of this nature.

### **Betrayal of Memory?**

The third tranche of questions raised by this case is an extremely difficult one. It relates to the question of betraying the memory of someone praised as one of the greatest Churchmen of the 20th Century, a man who had devoted so much of his ministry to the cause of peace.

There is no doubt that George Bell achieved many great things during his lifetime, for which he is rightly honoured and which should continue to be remembered. But any suggestion that

those who have done good deeds should be afforded an extra degree of protection from serious allegations cannot be upheld. This is fundamentally wrong.

This position led many institutions, including the Church, to respond to allegations of sexual abuse so poorly in the past and we cannot – and will not – allow this to continue in the 21st century. All allegations of abuse must be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively and professionally; we must never demand a higher threshold of suspicion because the accused person is of high standing, or has an ‘impeccable’ reputation, however uncomfortable this may make us feel.

To conclude: this case has been extremely difficult for all concerned. Many complexities – legal and otherwise – have given rise to many questions. A number of the questions which have risen cannot be answered, and this blog offers clarification as to why that is so, and also provides some guidance to those frequently-posed questions to which answers can be given.

Gabrielle Higgins, Chichester Diocesan Secretary

## **SOURCE 10**

Debate on the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure, House of Lords, 28 January 2016.

**Lord Lexden (Con):** My Lords, I agree wholeheartedly with the extremely powerful and moving remarks made by my noble friend Lord Cormack. I will, if I may, very briefly add one further issue.

The diocese of Chichester decided recently that a former bishop, George Bell, whose memory is respected, indeed venerated, sexually abused a child some 65 years ago. This decision has provoked deep concern, particularly regarding the process followed in reaching it. There was just one, apparently uncorroborated, accusation. The names of those who decided the case have not been made public and neither has the amount of money paid to the complainant; nor have we been told the names of the experts who interviewed the complainant. The current Bishop of Chichester has declared that the church has, in this matter, acted with transparency. A more accurate word, surely, would be “opaque”. Deep hurt and bewilderment have been caused among many faithful members of the church. Should not our leaders give a full and proper account of the process by which the church has endangered the reputation of a very great man?

**The Lord Bishop of Durham:** I express my thanks to the noble Lords who have spoken and add my thanks to those of the noble Lord, Lord Judd, to the noble Baroness, Lady Butler-Sloss, for her chairing of the Ecclesiastical Committee. It was my first experience of attending such a committee with such a piece of legislation and I was treated with lots of courtesy, for which I am grateful. I will say as much as I can in response to some of the things that have been said. I am very grateful to the noble Lords for raising these matters and delighted that they are not opposed to the Measure.

The history of the successive Bishops of Gloucester highlights the very real difficulty we have found ourselves in. With regards to Michael Perham, the most recently retired Bishop of Gloucester, let me please assure the House that every time a case like this happens we follow a serious safeguarding case procedure. When that has been gone through, the last act is that the

whole thing is reviewed to see what lessons might be learned from it for the future. I assure noble Lords that such a review has been undertaken and that some significant lessons have been noted. As that has not yet finally been shared with Michael Perham himself, I do not think it would be appropriate to say too much about it. However, I assure noble Lords that that review has occurred. One of the realities of the situation is that if this Measure had been in place, we would have been better able to handle it than we were when the circumstance arose.

In response to the noble Lords, Lord Cormack and Lord Judd, the issue of pastoral support, care and counselling, not only for the person against whom an allegation is made but for their family, for the survivor—the person who has made the allegation—and sometimes in parochial situations for the entire community, has to be taken on board. We are constantly learning lessons about that. Certainly, we have learned further from Michael Perham's case and will make some changes in the light of that experience. I hope that reassures your Lordships that we have done a thorough review.

There is a difficulty with the issue of anonymity—I perhaps share slightly the cynical thought of the noble Lord, Lord Judd, on this issue—and perhaps I may refer to the Peter Ball case. It is a deeply sad case with which the church is still having to come to terms. The reality is that people stepped forward and made allegations against him many years ago, and the church simply did not believe them. However, he has finally admitted his guilt and is now serving a prison sentence. That illustrates the tension that we live with in respecting and honouring all that a senior person in the church has done, and yet having to live with the reality that people who do great things sometimes also make very grave errors. We must not hide away from it when they do.

Another issue with anonymity, which we can get caught with, is that, first, sometimes names get into the public realm not because the church put them there but because others do. We then have work out how to handle the situation. The other reality is that when the name is put into the public realm, other people come forward and we discover that what was one allegation that may have appeared false is proved to be true.

A great deal of work is ongoing around support and pastoral care. Often, it is not the person against whom the allegation is made who is most seriously affected but close relatives and other members of their family. We have to watch for that.

Without wanting to deflect the question concerning Bishop George Bell, I refer the noble Lord, Lord Lexden, to the extensive explanation on the Chichester diocesan website that deals with the reasons why we have not been able to put into the public realm some of the information asked for. The decision to put his name into the public realm was not taken lightly. I was aware of this for at least two years before any decision was taken.

Secondly, I refer to what I said earlier: this is not to denigrate in any way the amazing work done by Bishop George Bell. He was an astounding man and leader of the church. But we also have to recognise that it is possible for great people to make mistakes. In fact, if noble Lords read very carefully the statements that have been put out, they will see that there has been no declaration that we are convinced that this took place. It is about the balance of probabilities and what might have happened if it had come to light at an earlier date. On matters such as whether his name will remain on the church calendar, no decisions have been made and no proposals have yet been suggested.

## SOURCE 11

The *Brighton Argus*, 2 February 2016

TODAY, for the first time, the victim of George Bell has spoken about the sexual abuse she suffered as a five-year-old child at the hands of the wartime Bishop of Chichester. Speaking exclusively to The Argus, she described how he repeatedly molested her over a period of four years while telling her that God loved her. Her testimony brings new clarity to a story which has changed the world's perception of one of the most revered Anglicans of the 20th century since news of a church payout was announced last October. Motivated to speak by comments made in the press in defence of Bell's legacy, she raises fresh questions over the failure of senior church officials to respond adequately to allegations of which they were first informed in 1995.

As the leading bishop in the diocese of Chichester, George Bell was head of the Anglican Church in Sussex for 29 years from 1929 until his death in 1958. He was remembered as a patron of the arts and a courageous opponent of appeasement and Nazism who came close to being appointed Archbishop of Canterbury. But in October of last year the current Bishop, Martin Warner, released a shocking statement which admitted that the Church had paid a settlement to a victim over allegations of sexual abuse committed in the 1940s when the complainant was a young child.

The Argus can now reveal that the formerly revered prelate molested a young girl, a relative of a church employee, for a period of four years beginning when she was just five years old. Under the pretence of reading her a story, he would take her to a private room, sit her on his lap and move his hands over her thighs before moving her underwear aside and interfering with her. After struggling with feelings of guilt for decades, the survivor wrote to Bishop Eric Kemp in 1995 but his only action was to advise her to speak to a local vicar.

She told The Argus that the response knocked her back. "When things started to be more open that's when you feel you can say something. You thought about saying something for years but then you thought 'no'. And then when you do, and not a lot's done about it, you shut up again." She says today that she later wrote to the office of Rowan Williams when he was Archbishop of Canterbury. Lord Williams told The Argus yesterday that he was certain he saw no such correspondence.

The victim only received a satisfactory response when she wrote in 2013 to the present Archbishop Justin Welby. However a further 18 months passed before she received an out-of-court settlement of £15,000 and an apology.

In the text of his letter of apology, never before disclosed, Bishop Warner of Chichester said: "I recognise that the two years of waiting since [writing to the Archbishop in 2013] have been very difficult, and that at times you may have felt that people in the Church were hoping that you would go away. "Please accept my reassurance that this has not been the case; there were many steps that needed to be taken in order to be able to respond as we have now done."

CAROL was a girl of five when she was introduced to Bishop George Bell for the first time. Over the following four years, under the guise of reading her a bedtime story, he would go on

to repeatedly molest and abuse this Chichester schoolgirl, all the while telling her that God loved her.

Carol (not her real name) comes from a large family so to relieve the pressure on her mother, a relative who worked for the church would often take the little girl with her when she went to work at the Bishop's Palace. Speaking about her ordeal for the first time, exclusively to The Argus, Carol said: "I went for weekends and school holidays, usually for two or three days at a time, sometimes a week. "He used to say to her, 'well I'll take Carol and I'll read her a story while you get on with your work'." Carol explained that the abuse took place frequently. "It was whenever he got a chance to take me off on my own. My strongest memory is seeing this figure all in black, standing on a stair, waiting. He used to wear a black tunic thing that came down to his knees and long black leggings, that's what I can remember. They might have been trousers. They looked like leggings to me. If you go into the Bishop's kitchen there's a wooden stair that comes down and he used to wait on there, half way down it. "And then he'd go, 'Oh Elsie, I'll take Carol and read her a story.'" He used to take me off down this long corridor and there was a big room at the end and he used to take me in there. "There were books all around the room. And then he'd shut the door."

The 65-year-old man, who had once been tipped to become Britain's post-war Archbishop of Canterbury, sat five-year-old Carol on his knee. She said: "He did start reading a story, to start with, and then he'd start wriggling about a bit with me on his lap. "He started wriggling and then he started touching me, between my legs." Bell never kissed her or removed any of her clothes or his own. But she described how his hands would become more and more invasive. "It started off with a bit of touching."

She said there was no undressing but he would pull her knickers aside to interfere with her. This did not take place every time she visited the 12th century cathedral but for four years whenever the bishop got Carol alone to "read her a story", she was abused. "It's almost like he was waiting just to get me there," she said.

Carol told the relative with whom she was staying but the testimony of a primary-school girl against one of the world's most revered churchmen carried little weight in the late 1940s, even within a family. She said: "The first occasion, I raised it with her. But back then, you were told 'Shhh, you don't say that, that's not nice, don't tell fibs'. Back in them days everything was swept under the carpet." Although Carol remembers the abuse clearly, she acknowledged that after more than 60 years, some things are not as easy to recall. "I don't know how I felt when she told me to go with him. Back then you did what you were told, so 'you go with the bishop' and you just trotted off, especially once you've mentioned it once and been told not to tell lies."

And the bishop, sitting in his black robes of office with the child on his knee, had told young Carol not to tell anyone what happened between them. "He said it was our little secret, because God loved me." When Carol was nine, her father's job took the family away from the area and she never saw that room, or Bell, again.

She got married in her teens and raised a family. Her roots are in this area but she prefers to stay away from Chichester. "I don't like looking at the cathedral," she said. "We keep moving, because I can't stand it. I'll come back here for a while but then we moved away. "And of course, the cathedral dominates Chichester no matter where you go." For decades she tried to put her childhood abuse out of her mind but it cast a heavy shadow. She said: "It's something that lives with you for the rest of your life. It never goes away. You can push it, for a while,

and then something, you either read in the paper or see on the television, and it comes back again.” Carol paused at this point, and wiped her eyes. “Sorry,” she said, “bit silly at my age.” She added: “The more you talk about it, it just brings it all back again.”

She said that she believes that lifelong feelings of depression and alienation can be traced to what happened to her. “I’ve had nerve problems and I often get a bit depressed. I was a bit of a loner as a kid. “I never mixed well with other children, I’ve always felt like I was the odd one out.” It affected her behaviour towards her own family, too. “I was so protective of my daughters, I didn’t want them to go out. “They went out, but I’d sit up, even when they were teenagers, I wouldn’t go to bed. My sons too. I sat up and waited for them to come home because I was worried that something might happen,” she said. “And they used to say, ‘oh don’t be daft Mum, we’re all right, we can look after ourselves,’ and I’d think ‘no you can’t’.”

After more than 40 years, in a different time, Carol wrote a letter to the then-Bishop of Chichester, Eric Kemp. She said that – like many sexual abuse survivors – she had struggled for years with the sense that perhaps she was partly responsible or had done something to encourage the abusive behaviour. But in 1995, she was spurred into action. “There was something in the paper. About somebody being molested,” she said. “And I thought, ‘you know, it’s not our fault’. And that’s when I wrote. But I got very little sympathy.” In fact, Kemp took no action except to offer Carol pastoral support from another churchman. She said: “I got a letter back telling me to go and see a vicar in Whyke and he was moving away anyway. “And I didn’t really want to talk to another vicar. “It made me feel, ‘what’s the point?’. “All he’s doing is sending me to a vicar who’s going away. I’d already read that he was due to be moved on. So it was a case of me talking to somebody that wasn’t going to be there for long anyway.” Carol never spoke to the vicar. “I know it wasn’t my fault,” she said, “but for years you think it’s your fault. “And then when things started to be more open, if you know what I mean, that’s when you feel you can say something. “You thought about saying something for years, but then you thought, ‘no’. “And then when you do, and not a lot’s done about it, you shut up again.”

Carol does not have a copy of that correspondence from 20 years ago but in his letter of apology dated September 2015, current Bishop of Chichester Martin Warner makes reference to it. His letter states: “I understand that in 1995 you approached Eric Kemp, the Bishop of Chichester at the time, giving a clear and unambiguous account of your memories.” It continues: “No one reading that letter could have been in any doubt that you were referring to serious sexual abuse by a senior figure in the Church of England.” Carol explained that when she steeled herself to raise the issue again in around 2010, she decided to go to the very top of the Church of England. “The first time I raised it this time around, I didn’t write to [Chichester], because I never got much satisfaction then, so I wrote to the Archbishop before this one and all I got was a “sorry this happened”, that was it and that was in an email.”

Carol no longer has a copy of that email correspondence with Lambeth Palace, the headquarters of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who at that time was Dr Rowan Williams. The Church of England’s public statements on the case have made no reference to his having been involved in, or aware of, the case. It was Rowan Williams who, in 2008, dedicated to George Bell the property formerly known as 4, Canon Lane, in the grounds of the cathedral.

The “George Bell House” plaque continues to adorn the wall by the front door, despite a Church statement in October promising to rename the house “shortly”. Yesterday Lord Williams told



The Argus that he had no recollection of such an email, saying “I am quite certain that I saw nothing on this matter”.

Carol finally felt that she received a proper hearing when she wrote to the current Archbishop, Justin Welby, in 2013 shortly after his investiture. He contacted the cathedral and, she said, “told them to get it sorted”. The cathedral paid for Carol to have counselling – which included a return to the scene of her abuse, which she hated – and appointed an intermediary. Carol understands that this woman acted as an “independent go-between” and it was she who put Carol in touch with Tracey Emmott, of Emmott Snell solicitors, who subsequently won compensation from the Church. A year and a half elapsed between Carol contacting Justin Welby and receiving compensation and a letter of apology from Martin Warner, the Bishop of Chichester. She said of the letter: “That’s what I wanted mostly, a ‘sorry’ that it happened.”

During this period her letter was passed on to the police, who interviewed her at home and told her that had Bell been alive today (he died in 1958), he would have been arrested. In the Church statement on the matter, dated October 22 of last year, Bishop Warner said: “Following a meeting between the survivor and Sussex police in 2013, it was confirmed by the police that the information obtained from their enquiries would have justified, had he still been alive, Bishop Bell’s arrest and interview on suspicion of serious sexual offences, followed by release on bail, further enquiries and the subsequent submission of a police report to the CPS.” Carol said she never considered going directly to the police herself. Of the £15,000 she received from the Church of England in a civil settlement last September, she said: “I just wanted somebody to recognise what had happened to me. “I mean the compensation, I’ve not spent much of it. “I’ve given some to my granddaughter to help with expenses and I’ve bought myself a tumble dryer. “Is £15,000 appropriate? I don’t know what’s appropriate for having your life messed up.”

The case, the reputation of the accused, the anonymity of the accuser and the secrecy surrounding the allegations and evidence have caused a national re-evaluation of Bell’s legacy and, in some quarters, heated debate. Bishop Luffa Church of England School in Chichester has changed the name of one of its school houses from “Bell House” and Bishop Bell School in Eastbourne last month announced it will change its name to St Catherine’s. The Church has said it will rename George Bell House but in the four months since Bishop Warner’s letter of apology to Carol has not yet done so. And Chichester Cathedral briefly placed a “safeguarding notice” in front of a monument to Bell inside the building but removed the notice last month.

Meanwhile respected Establishment commentators have questioned the Church’s handling of the issue and picked apart the statement of October 22.

Senior London Judge Alan Pardoe QC, writing in The Church Times, said the statement was “appallingly unfair to the reputation of George Bell” whom he called “an immensely courageous... bishop, a tremendous figure in the Church and one whose posthumous reputation has stood very high.”

Journalist Peter Hitchens warned in The Argus against condemning Bell in the absence of due process. He wrote in his Mail on Sunday blog: “I very much hope that [Alan Pardoe’s] thoughtful and powerful intervention will cause some heart-searching among those who have so far been willing to let Bishop Bell’s reputation suffer without any sort of fair trial.”

Opinion and editorial pieces in *The Times* and *The Telegraph* have also asked questions, including whether Bell is now being made an “un-person” in Chichester following institutional name changes. Carol said that it was comments in response to the Church’s announcement which spurred her to take up this newspaper’s offer, made through her solicitor, to tell her side of the story.

She said: “Some of the remarks I’ve read made me very upset. Because he did good things, they automatically assume that he couldn’t do anything wrong, which was rather hurtful because a lot of men who have done good things have also done very evil things. He might be a man of peace but that doesn’t take away the fact of what he did to me.” Carol had taken only a couple of moments to master her emotions while speaking for well over an hour about extremely traumatic childhood memories. But she became visibly upset and looked deeply hurt as she reflected on the voices speaking in support of George Bell’s legacy. “A lot of them probably weren’t even around at the time. And they don’t know what it’s like. They don’t know how I feel. If it happened to them, how would they feel?” she said. She does not believe the impossibility of a trial should prevent her from speaking out or provoke so many to defend the bishop. “It’s almost like they’re saying I should have kept my mouth shut and not said anything. Just do that and his good name goes on, you understand? But what they’re saying is because he couldn’t go to court to stand trial, why are we bothering? I don’t know,” she finished resignedly, and paused again to dry her cheeks.

Some have questioned whether such a revered man’s name should have been dragged through the mud in the absence of evidence and have asked for proof of the abuse. Carol’s reply is simple: “Then why did the Church pay me? They must have believed me, I assume.” She said the detective inspector she spoke to also said he believed her account. She added: “People didn’t believe about Jimmy Savile, I mean who’d have thought? “Even I didn’t really believe it to start with. Until you started to read what he’d done. And he did a lot of good.” This last reflection is particularly illuminating.

Because despite the abuse, the lifelong trauma, the years of staying away from her home city and the shadow of its cathedral, and being repeatedly rebuffed or ignored by the Church, Carol acknowledges that the man who stole her innocence is a complex figure. With a graciousness few could muster under the circumstances, she said: “I’m not saying that he didn’t do good. “All I’m saying is what he did to me wasn’t good. He still did good things elsewhere. But I was his weakness.” Reflecting on his legacy, she added: “It’s a hard one. Because he did some good. But to me he did harm. And sometimes I think the Church likes to sweep those kind of things under the table.” She fears that recent noises from the Church signal a return to opaque form.

She is upset that the monument to George Bell – which reads “A true pastor, poet, and patron of the arts, champion of the oppressed and tireless worker for Christian unity” – once again stands unadorned in the centre of the cathedral without any notice referencing her case. She said: “Well it’s a case of ‘everything will be forgotten soon’, then.” And she suggested the Church had dragged its feet since September over the renaming of George Bell House because “they think it’ll all die down”. She has been pleased by the name changes that have already taken place but has no great hopes for the complete removal of Bell’s legacy from church property. “I think they should rename the house, but they’re not going to at this point, are they, I don’t think.”

The last time Carol returned to the cathedral where she was abused in the 1940s and early 1950s was when her Church-sponsored counsellor took her back there two years ago. Visibly upset again, Carol explained: "The lady who was giving me counselling, actually took me to the Bishop's kitchen." The Cathedral had some sort of pottery exhibition on there, and she said 'we'll go, and see how you feel'. "Well I got in there, and I said 'Can we leave now?' We had to leave." Carol's voice only broke once in the course of a three hour interview, when she recalled how it felt to stand back in that room, at the foot of those stairs. Hoarsely, slowly, she said: "It was horrible. You start to feel all jelly inside. It's not nice, believe me." Perhaps, having bravely chosen to break the silence to which she was entitled, Carol has helped ensure that she will not have to revisit that Cathedral kitchen - in her mind or in person - ever again.

## **SOURCE 12**

Statement issued by the Bishop of Chichester 3 February 2016

The Bishop of Chichester, Dr Martin Warner, has issued the following statement following an article published in the Brighton Argus Newspaper.

The feature article contains an interview with the survivor of abuse at the centre of the story about former Bishop of Chichester, George Bell.

Dr Warner said:

"It is testimony to her courage and integrity that the survivor who brought the allegations against George Bell has been prompted to speak out. My hope is that the telling of her story will contribute to her sense of being heard by those within and beyond the Church who are willing to listen with an open mind and respond with compassion and clarity.

"The presence of strident voices in the public arena which have sought to undermine the survivor's claims has added in this case to the suffering of the survivor and her family. To that extent it is not surprising that she felt it necessary to take the courageous decision to speak out in public and reveal the personal details which the Church could not.

"Words of apology written in a letter can never be enough to express the Church's shame or our recognition of damage done. However, the apology that I made on behalf of the Diocese of Chichester is genuine and a sincere expression that lessons are being learnt about how we respond to accusations of abuse.

"In some responses to the George Bell case, and to the original statements from the Church nationally and locally in the diocese of Chichester, we have witnessed shocking ignorance of the suffering felt at many different levels by victims of abuse."

## **SOURCE 13**

Statement issued to all staff and students at the University of Chichester, 3 February 2016

Bishop George Bell

You will be aware of the recent revelations regarding the late Bishop George Bell. Last October, the Diocese of Chichester made a compensatory payment and issued a public apology to the victim in an historic case of child sexual abuse. Those who wish to defend Bell's achievements in international reconciliation have called for a public debate on this matter and public analysis of the evidence, in the way that court proceedings for a living person might provide. I wish to dissociate the University of Chichester from any such debate since, in my view, it will only increase the pain felt by the victim, dissuade victims of similar abuses to come forward in the future and serve to mitigate what should be our unequivocal disgust at child sexual abuse.

This approach has been reflected in the press statements we have issued to journalists and our work with radio and television broadcasters since the news broke in October. All press relations are being handled by our Press Office and I would be grateful if you would refer any external enquiries you receive to Helen McKenna-Aspell, Director of Marketing, Communications and Access.

Arrangements are in hand to rename Bishop Bell Hall of Residence on our Chichester Campus. In fact, we will take this opportunity to rename all the 'Bishop' Halls. The new names will be used in all correspondence with prospective new students from March and the physical renaming will take place in June.

We have already closed the George Bell Institute, which is one of our research centres. The George Bell Fellows, appointed by the Institute in association with the now defunct George Bell Trust, are being notified that the Fellowships have ended and the titles are being withdrawn.

I know that you will join me in expressing support for the victims of childhood sexual abuse and the courage that has enabled the victim in this case to step forward. The University has a long and productive record of supporting child protection through our teacher training, early years, social work and sports coaching programmes. This is the heritage that we must preserve.

## **SOURCE 14**

Statement issued by the Bishop of Durham after the House of Lords debate of 28 January 2016.

Recent media comment regarding **Bishop** George Bell has focused on my recent contributions made in the House **of** Lords in response to a question on the Church's actions in this matter.

On reflection I believe my words were not as clear as they could have been and I welcome this opportunity to provide further clarity.

Almost three years ago a civil claim was made, raising allegations **of** abuse by George Bell, the former **Bishop of** Chichester.

In response to the claim independent legal and medical reports were commissioned and duly considered. The evidence available was interrogated and evaluated. This led to a decision to settle the claim and to offer a formal apology to the survivor. This decision was taken on the balance of probabilities - the legal test applicable in civil claims.

The church therefore, having evaluated the evidence before them, accepted the veracity of the claims before them. Some commentators have suggested by doing so the Church abrogated its responsibility to George Bell's reputation.

In all of the above the wider legacy of George Bell was evident in discussions. The decisions were not taken lightly or without consideration of the impact on the reputation of George Bell. But in this case, as in others, the overriding goal was to search out the truth and issues of reputation cannot take priority over that.

I recognise this will be hard for many to accept because of George Bell's ministry and reputation. But when faced with allegations of abusive behaviour we cannot ignore it or pretend it did not occur. There will be those who will be unsatisfied with the above process, desiring a decision to have been taken on a criminal test of beyond reasonable doubt. This was of course not possible due to George Bell having been long deceased. In any event it is entirely possible for someone who is found not to be guilty in a criminal trial to be found to have acted wrongfully in a civil claim.

The language of legal tests has become the focus of much of the debate. In doing so it masks the genuine suffering and damage done to an individual in this case, compounded by the Church's own failures to respond adequately to a claim of serious sexual abuse.

The question as whether we were right to publish the name of George Bell has also been raised. By doing so the Church has been accused of destroying the reputation of one of its heroes. Had we not done so we would have been accused of a "cover up" and placing the reputation of one of our great bishops ahead of fairness to survivors.

It would be an understatement to say that the Church of England has not handled safeguarding cases well in past decades. Over the past 5 years we have begun to make changes to our policies and procedures to address that. One of our guiding principles has been a step change in our commitment to openness. This has been evidenced in the publication of reports and establishment of independent reviews wherever possible over the past five years.

Every case will require consideration on its own context. In this case the commitment to openness, combined with the decision to settle the claim on the evidence ahead of a civil court case, led to a decision to publish.

Since the exchange in the House of Lords the survivor has taken the brave decision to speak out for herself. This will have been very hard to do. Reading her own words only adds to my conviction that the church was right to make a settlement in this matter, and right to make this known as was done.

The Bishop of Chichester has apologised on behalf of the Church to the individual concerned. I would add my own voice to that apology particularly if any of my recent comments have been interpreted as in anyway minimising or undermining her claims."

## SOURCE 15

Michael White article in the *Guardian-online*, 8 February 2016

It looks as if the Metropolitan police commissioner, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, is edging towards an apology to Field Marshall Lord Bramall, 92, over unfounded allegations of child sex abuse and that some kind of further apology is coming to the family of the late Leon Brittan. It's too late to do him much good, as it is to former prime minister Edward Heath, also caught up by some wildly improbable allegations.

Monday's report by senior Dorset police officer James Vaughan into the Met's handling of the Brittan allegations shows how complicated such historical claims can be.

Vaughan's report says detectives were "fully justified" in pursuing a "fairly compelling account" of rape in 1967 but only made to police in 2012, though procedural mistakes were made.

Newspapers that made hay with separate lurid claims of sexual abuse and worse, made by someone known as "Nick" and others, later switched sides, as their reporting of Vaughan confirms.

His report did not say Brittan would have been cleared, only that an acquittal was more likely than a conviction.

It's worth noting in passing that Vaughan concluded that a key police officer in the Brittan case misunderstood the law on consent and it would have been reasonable to arrest the former cabinet minister, which nearly happened but didn't. As so often, loose ends need tidying up.

But is (arguably) the most distinguished of all those accused, George Bell, bishop of Chichester (1929-58) – a saint by some reckonings – being quietly traduced by the Church of England to cover its own back?

I've made some inquiries but don't claim to know the definitive answer. Others are furious in his defence. One of them, ex-Telegraph editor and formidable Thatcher biographer Charles Moore thinks Bell has been stitched up by the police and his church. This case is again bubbling up this week thanks to a scoop in the Brighton Argus – of which more later.

In reality, Moore wrote last month (paywall), Bell was Chichester's "nearest thing to a saint since Richard of Chichester" – miracle-worker and patron saint of Sussex, who died in 1253. The issue has been scorching the pages of the church press – and here – since October, when Martin Warner, the current bishop, revealed that a pre-litigation sum of £15,000 compensation had been paid, and an apology made, to an unnamed victim of child abuse in the sepia tinted postwar years when society was more innocent than now.

Why should only right-wing pundits (Peter Hitchens is also on the case) and churchgoers be concerned? In January, the redoubtable cleric Giles Fraser weighed in in the *Guardian*. Fraser is agnostic about Bell's guilt but says due process and the rights of a much-admired bishop to be defended have left the church asking to have too much taken on trust.

Due process and a fair hearing should matter to secular progressives as much as they do to both sides in the Julian Assange case and other legal controversies. But Bell should appeal to the

left because he was a brave and early opponent of the Nazis (when the Daily Mail was still playing footsie), a friend and ally of the great and murdered Dietrich Bonhoeffer, of Gandhi and TS Eliot, a champion of refugees.

Perhaps most compelling of all, during the second world war Bell was a courageous critic of Allied bombing of German civilian targets. I'm not sure I'd have agreed with him but it took guts. It may also have cost him the archbishopric of Canterbury.

Was this the man who also did cruel and wicked things to a small girl in his care under the pretext of reading her a bedtime story a few years later? The question is hard to answer at 65 years' distance. Human nature has a dark side, as Bell, who saw Hitlerism close up, knew better than most.

Here's last week's Brighton Argus's scoop, an interview with the alleged victim, "Carol", her life intact but marked by what she says happened.

Like Dorset copper Vaughan's reading of the account of "Jane", Brittan's alleged rape victim, I found her story chilling and – on the face of it – persuasive. So was Argus reporter Joel Adams on Radio 4.

Others I have spoken to dismiss it. In his Telegraph column on Monday Charles Moore protests that those who knew and loved Bell, some still alive, have not been given a chance to defend him, that no lawyer was appointed to sift the evidential record of the time.

Warner is using Carol as "a human shield" to protect his own procedural failings, he argues.

On Sunday, Hitchens also returned to the fray, citing an admission by Paul Butler, the bishop of Durham, the No 3 man in C of E's hierarchy and charged with supervising these cases. Butler said in the Lords (column 1,516, pdf) that Bell was "an astounding man" and that, after careful consideration, the church was not saying he actually did what he is alleged to have done.

"There has been no declaration that we are convinced that this took place. It's about the balance of probabilities," Butler told peers.

That's quite a stroke and not how the "Bell guilty, admits church" headlines told it last October. Here's Warner's latest statement. My own inquiries shed light in both directions. Friends who know church politics and gossip very well tell me the diocese of Chichester has had an unsavoury reputation for sexual misconduct for decades, as demonstrated by the Peter Ball case. He was finally jailed last year at 83 despite friends in high places.

The issue was compounded by a geographical split in which posher West Sussex – around Chichester and its handsome 12th-century cathedral – is a centre of high church Anglo-Catholicism, whereas East Sussex was until recently the territory of south-coast evangelical Anglicans, some of whom are anti-women, anti-gay. It is not quite Shia and Sunni, but C of E's culture wars have been nasty, and still are.

Given the shaming of the Catholic church worldwide and Anglicanism closer to home, given the uproar over paedophilia and establishment cover-ups (some bits real, others the fruit of

malign or damaged imagination), it's easy to see why Lambeth Palace seems to have prudently sacrificed the reputation of a long dead bishop under the leadership of Justin Welby.

It's also disappointing. Those close to Rowan Williams, the last archbishop, are categorical that they have no record that a complaint against Bell reached Lambeth on his watch circa 2010. The buck passes. Meanwhile, local buildings and institutions named in honour of Bell are being renamed, no Cecil Rhodes reprieve for him.

Yet for justice to be done and seen to be done, process matters. Bell may or may not be guilty. But quasi saints do not come along very often and the comments of those who have affected his reputation need to be examined.

Process matters, the right to a proper police investigation and legal defence matters for the guilty as much as the innocent. It is that responsibility which distinguishes us from lynch mobs, be they in dusty Mississippi towns, dustier Iraqi ones – or on Twitter.

## **SOURCE 16**

Statement from the Chichester Cathedral Chapter, 12 February 2016:

In October 2015 we announced that we would be reflecting on Bishop Bell's legacy here at the Cathedral. This followed an announcement made by the current Bishop of Chichester, Dr Martin Warner, who had issued a formal apology following the settlement of a legal civil claim against George Bell, regarding child sexual abuse. George Bell was Bishop of Chichester from 1929 until shortly before his death in 1958.

At the same time, we stated that this reappraisal would include renaming our Centre for Education, Vocation and Reconciliation that bears Bishop Bell's name: George Bell House. Since then, as an interim measure, we have referred to the house as 4 Canon Lane.

The decision to rename the house has both received much support, and also met with considerable and sustained objections, from within and outside the Church. We have been working to achieve consensus on this issue and Chapter can confirm today that the house will continue to be referred to as 4 Canon Lane for the time being. Chapter committed to reaffirming and strengthening the house in the primary purpose for which it was originally established (as a Centre for Education, Vocation and Reconciliation) and to consult and take time over the choice of a new name.

As part of this re-evaluation, Chapter have also considered the memorial to Bell within the Cathedral. There are those who find the description of George Bell on the memorial problematic since the announcement of the settlement, however, its description of Bell was felt to be an appropriate tribute in 1961 when the memorial was put in place. Changing, or adding to, a historic memorial is complex and it will take time to ensure that the Cathedral's response to the memorial is both appropriate to Bell's historic legacy and to the circumstances following the settlement. The Cathedral has issued comprehensive guidance to its volunteers on how to refer to Bell's legacy while acknowledging the recent settlement and apology by Bishop Martin.'



## SOURCE 17

The George Bell Group Review 20 March 2016

### **A REVIEW BY THE BELL GROUP OF THE TREATMENT BY THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND OF THE LATE BISHOP OF CHICHESTER, GEORGE BELL**

**20 March 2016**

#### **The Purpose of this Review:**

1. The purpose of this Review is to examine the process leading up to the release by the Church of England's Media Centre of its statement on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015 ("the October Statement") and the events which followed in the hope that no further steps will be taken to remove Bishop Bell's name from public memorials until a proper enquiry has taken place into the allegations against him. The members of the Bell Support Group responsible for this document believe that natural justice and the damage done to the Bishop's good name by the October Statement cry out for such an enquiry.

#### **The Reputation of Bishop Bell until 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015:**

2. The reputation of George Bell, Bishop of Chichester from 1929 to 1958 could hardly be better described than it is on the memorial plaque in the Cathedral:

*"A TRUE PASTOR  
POET AND PATRON OF THE ARTS  
CHAMPION OF THE OPPRESSED  
AND TIRELESS WORKER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY".*

3. Until the October Statement Bishop Bell's reputation was close to saintly. It was certainly quite unsullied: he is commemorated in the Church's liturgical calendar on 3<sup>rd</sup> October and Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford has an altar dedicated to him. Following the Statement the wording of the Memorial in Chichester Cathedral has been described by the Diocese as "*problematic*", and it seems likely that at some stage in the future a proposal may be made to remove the late Bishop's name from the Calendar.

### *The Wording of the Church's Statement of 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015:*

4. The wording of the October Statement was treated by the media as an acceptance by the Church that Bishop Bell was a *proven* paedophile. Examples of such reports on the same day are:

(1) *The Telegraph*: “A former Church of England bishop revered as a peacemaker – and granted the closest thing Anglicanism has to a saint’s day – was a paedophile, the Church has acknowledged.”

(2) *The BBC*: “A victim who was sexually abused as a young child by a former Bishop of Chichester who died in the 1950s has received compensation from the Church.”

(3) *The Times*: “Eminent bishop was paedophile, admits Church.”

5. It is not clear who drafted the October Statement, but it seems that only a very small number of people in the Diocese were involved (for example, the Dean of Chichester has never seen the evidence relied upon). What is clear, however, is that the Statement was very carefully worded. In the House of Lords on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016 the Bishop of Durham told the assembled peers that if they “*read very carefully the statements that have been put out, they will see that there has been no declaration that we are **convinced** that this [abuse] took place [emphasis added]*”. If those responsible were not convinced by the evidence before them, the wording of the October Statement was (at best) reprehensibly equivocal, and (at worst) positively misleading. It was predictable that the subtlety of the wording would be overlooked and that the media would report the statement in precisely the way they did.

6. To the credit of the BBC, the Corporation has accepted that both their broadcast and their article online were inaccurate in suggesting that Bishop Bell had been proven guilty of sexual abuse. The Head of Editorial Complaints acknowledged to a complainant that “*no information has been disclosed about the matter which might warrant the view that the allegations had in effect been proven, even though not through court proceedings.*”

7. A particularly prejudicial part of the Statement, since it has no direct bearing on the truth of the complaint, is that which stated that the Sussex Police had confirmed in 2013 that the information obtained “*would have justified, had he still been alive, Bishop Bell’s arrest and interview, on suspicion of serious sexual offences.....*”. Those unfamiliar with police procedure will have had their minds prejudiced and most likely have thought that this added weight to the allegations. In fact, an arrest in such circumstances in order to carry out an interview under caution is standard police process. This has been confirmed in a letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> February 2016 by T/Detective Superintendent Jason Tingley of Sussex Police. There has been no suggestion that the police based their statement on any evidence other than Carol’s complaint. Furthermore, Sussex Police confirmed on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016 that they had received no further complaints about Bishop Bell. This is significant: experience shows that instances of solitary abuse, one adult only picking on one child, are exceptionally rare.

8. Following an arrest police procedure involves carrying out further inquiries before submitting a report to the Crown Prosecution Service for advice on whether to charge. It is elementary that not every arrest and inquiry is followed by a charge, not every charge results in a trial and not every trial results in a conviction. Mr Tingley has stated that only 20% to 30% of investigations by Sussex Police result in a suspect being charged.

9. In the October Statement the Diocese did not shrink from naming Bell as being liable to arrest had he still been alive. But in fact had he been arrested, the police would not have named him at that stage. The conduct of the Diocese in this respect differs from the manner in which the Church dealt with the publication of the report commissioned from Ian Elliott into the conduct of Chancellor Garth Moore and Brother Michael Fisher, both of whom were dead. In October the Church paid £35,000 damages to a man subjected to attempted rape by Moore, who died in 1990 after requesting to meet his victim on his deathbed. Initially (according to a report in *The Times* of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016) the Church named neither priest, nor the Bishop (the Church's spokesman on child protection, the Bishop of Durham) who was said to have broken off contact with the victim on the advice of insurers. The names of the priests and the Bishop were confirmed after *The Times* managed to see a full copy of the report.

### **The Background to the Diocese's Settlement with the Complainant:**

10. It is not the intention of this review to try to overturn or undermine the settlement reached between the Church and the individual whom the October Statement calls "the survivor", still less to do anything which might tend to reveal her identity. The Group does not challenge the survivor's belief in her account; the question is whether others should believe it. The shock at the contents of the October Statement felt by those still alive who knew Bishop Bell and by those who revere his memory was all the greater for the fact that it is not possible to gauge the basis upon which the Chichester Diocese decided to pay compensation of an unstated amount (later revealed as £15,000) and to issue a formal apology.

11. It has never been said whether insurers were involved in the settlement, but the figure for damages is very modest for serious sexual abuse alleged to have taken place over such a lengthy period. (It is markedly less than the £35,000 compensation paid to the victim of the attempted rape by Chancellor Moore). It is obvious that insurers would have been keen to settle the Chichester claim as quickly and cheaply as possible, and would have had little or no interest in the reputation of a dead man, however much revered.

12. Any attempt to understand the background to the settlement is complicated by the fact that the Diocese also accepted that Bishop Eric Kemp had not dealt adequately with the complaint when it was first raised in August 1995. It is not clear whether compensation was paid for that deficiency. At any rate what were described as "*serious sexual offences*", which were alleged to have occurred in "*the late 1940s and early 1950s*" were not made the subject of complaint for well over 40 years, by which time Bishop Bell (who had no children to defend his name) had been dead for 37 years.

13. The Church, citing confidentiality, has provided no further information beyond that contained in the October Statement. That statement gave no indication of the nature of the abuse, the circumstances in which it was alleged to have occurred, or even the gender of the alleged victim. It simply said that "*the settlement followed a thorough pre-litigation process*

during which further investigations into the claim took place, including the commissioning of expert independent reports”. None of these reports had “found any reason to doubt the veracity of the claim”.

14. In his statement in October 2015 Bishop Warner said of his revered predecessor that “we face with shame a story of abuse of a child”. Such words left no room for doubt as to the (supposed) fact of the abuse. He explained that “the scrutiny of the allegation has been thorough, objective and undertaken by people who command the respect of all parties”. The Bishop did not identify the “parties” to whom he was referring, and he provided no information about the scrutineers, their number, their professional backgrounds or (most important of all) the nature of the process they undertook. This last point is especially relevant since the October Statement did not suggest that any corroboration of the allegations had been found. Nor, it might be added, has any come to light since. The October Statement invited those with further information to contact the hotline set up by the Church together with the NSPCC. As at 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016 the NSPCC had received no calls in relation to Bishop Bell.

### **The Investigation by Independent Experts:**

15. Although the Diocese has remained silent about the process of investigation, it has been described by the Bishop of Durham as not just robust, but “long and careful”. Using the pseudonym “Carol”, the complainant chose to provide details of the alleged assaults in an interview given to the *Brighton Argus* published on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016:

(1) Chichester Cathedral paid for “counselling which included a return to the scene of her abuse, which she hated”. The visit to the Palace would have confirmed nothing. It provides no proof of the allegations; on the contrary, from what she saw of the lay-out of the Palace it may well have served to confirm Carol’s self-belief that she had been assaulted there.

(2) Chichester Cathedral also appointed an intermediary, who “acted as an independent go-between”. However, it was this independent intermediary who introduced Carol to the solicitor who acted for her against the Diocese. The independence of the intermediary does not seem to have extended to protecting the interests of Bishop Bell. The process of investigation appears to have been complainant-led.

16. Carol’s account in the *Argus* was that Bishop Bell waited for her on the stairs leading to the Bishop’s Kitchen.

(1) Her quoted words are as follows:

*“If you go into the Bishop’s kitchen there’s a wooden stair that comes down and he used to wait on there, half way down it.*

*And then he’d go, ‘Oh, Elsie, I’ll take Carol and read her story.’”*

(2) As mentioned above, the counselling provided to Carol included a return to “the scene of her abuse”. Carol described that visit in the *Argus* article:

*“The lady who was giving me counselling, actually took me to the Bishop’s kitchen. The Cathedral had some sort of pottery exhibition on there, and she said ‘we’ll go, and see how you feel’. Well I got in there, and I said ‘Can we leave now?’. I had to leave.”*

(3) The author of the article records that *“Carol’s voice only broke once in the course of a three-hour interview, when she recalled how it felt to stand back in that room, at the foot of those stairs.”*

(4) The website of the Southern Ceramic Group <http://www.southernceramicgroup.co.uk/exhibitions/exhibitions/htm> shows photographs of the ceramic shows held in the Bishop’s Kitchen each summer since 2007 to date. As can be seen from the photographs, the Bishop’s Kitchen is a two-storey building with no staircase leading out of it. There is no staircase on which Carol could have seen the Bishop standing. The Bishop’s Kitchen (and for that matter the staircase *outside* it) was not part of the Bishop’s domestic residence or where he worked. Away from the door to the domestic quarters, it was a quite separate complex, at that time in regular use by the Theological College, its staff and students.

17. Despite the silence about the Diocese’s process of investigation, it is already clear that it was seriously deficient in a number of respects. In particular, no explanation has been given as to why no contact was made, before or after the October Statement, with the surviving chaplain of Bishop Bell (or that of Bishop Kemp).

(1) **Canon Adrian Carey:** Canon Carey was Bishop Bell’s chaplain from 1950 to 1952, the last two years of the four-year period over which the abuse is alleged to have taken place.

- Canon Carey has stated that from his knowledge of Bishop Bell and the hours which he worked, he finds it impossible to imagine how such abuse could have occurred. He knew who was obtaining access to the Bishop’s Palace, since it was his duty to answer the door. (Roy Porter, a previous domestic chaplain from 1947 to 1949, bears out Canon Carey’s evidence as to the hours worked by Bishop Bell; he recalled him being *“at work all day”*.)

- There was only one living-in member of staff at the Palace – the cook. Two women came in the morning to clean: Flora Monk, the wife of Charles (the Bishop’s chauffeur) and a Mrs Green. Apart from the chaplain, at a child’s bedtime in the evening, the only person working in the Palace was the cook. Canon Carey strongly refutes any suggestion that anyone working in the Palace *“would often take the little girl with her when she went to work”* [emphasis added]. He never saw a child in such circumstances, and it is not clear in what capacity the relative can possibly have worked at the Palace in the evenings.

(2) **Former Choristers:** No former choristers at Chichester Cathedral are known to have been approached by the inquiry team. Eleven of them who had served in the choir between 1949 and 1958 wrote to *The Times* in the aftermath of the October Statement recalling Bishop Bell as *“a loved, respected and saintly figure”* and describing the revelation by Bishop Warner as *“not only shocking but incredible to us – especially since so little information has been provided about the offence”*. They expressed the fear that Bishop Bell had been *“smeared*

*to suit a public relations need. Unless basic facts about the accusation are made public, its truth will remain cloudy.”*

(3) **Living relatives:** No attempt was made to find living relatives – a failure about which Bishop Warner has told one relative, Captain Wood, that Lambeth Palace is concerned. They are surely right to be so. Another relative, Bishop Bell’s niece, Mrs Barbara Whitley, who stayed from time to time in the Bishop’s Palace, is alive and well in her early-90s living in Kent.

(4) **Bishop Bell’s Papers and Diaries:** So far as has been revealed, no examination of the Archives or Bell’s extensive papers and diaries was conducted during the scrutiny said to have been so long and careful. This is potentially relevant, since Bishop Bell travelled widely abroad and was often away during the period of the alleged abuse (1948-1952), for example, in Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and India between August and December 1949. In a written Parliamentary answer for the Church Commissioners on 24th February 2016, Mrs Caroline Spelman MP confirmed that *“Lambeth Palace Library has no record in the last three years of any of the individuals involved in these investigations making an application to view the papers and diaries of George Bell that are held in the Library.”*

(5) **Historians and Experts on Bell:** Nor does any contact appear to have been made with any of those who have studied the life and character of Bishop Bell in depth, notwithstanding that his biographer, Dr Andrew Chandler works at the University of Chichester. Dr Chandler has pointed out that Bishop Bell’s *“daily patterns of life and work were meticulously documented by himself and almost constantly observed by those who lived and worked with him..... Bell shared almost all of his time with his wife, secretary, domestic chaplain and driver”*.

### **The Burden of Proof:**

18. All those who have expressed concern about the conduct of the Church are well aware that a civil claimant for damages does not need to prove their case to the criminal standard. However, the wording of the October Statement indicates that though Bishop Warner and the independent experts on whom he relied addressed the question whether there was *“reason to doubt the veracity of the claim”*, they did not approach the issue of liability by asking themselves whether the claimant had discharged the civil burden of proof on the balance of probability. This is probably because the inquiry team did not have a lawyer to assist them in a proper assessment of the evidence. In discharging the burden of proof in civil proceedings, there is no *prima facie* presumption as to the claimant’s credibility. On the contrary, it is for the claimant to adduce evidence to prove it.

19. If the independent experts had directed their minds to the balance of probability, they would have needed to take into account against the background of all that is known about Bishop Bell the inherent probability (or improbability) of him committing over a period of four years frequent serious sexual offences against a young child. The proper legal approach was expressed by Lord Nicholls in the House of Lords in ***Re H (Minors) (1996) AC 563***: *“The more improbable the event, the stronger must be the evidence that it did occur before, on the balance of probabilities, its occurrence will be established.”*

20. There is no reason to think that the experts or Bishop Warner approached the matter in this fashion. Natural justice makes the proper approach to the evidence all the more important, where there appears to be no corroboration and an adverse factual conclusion is drawn in the absence of any opportunity for refutation by the alleged perpetrator. The passage of time does not mean that there is no relevant circumstantial evidence, and a failure to seek it out undermines the conclusion drawn.

### **The Justification for Close Scrutiny of the Diocesan Investigation:**

21. In a letter published in the *Church Times* on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2015 the Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge and others expressed their “*hope that something at least of the ‘expert independent reports’ will be released, appropriately redacted, to demonstrate the strength of the evidence.....*”. Regrettably this has not happened, even after the complainant in early February 2016 chose to recount her story not merely to the *Brighton Argus*, but also to *BBC South Television*. A story on the BBC website for 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-sussex-35535241> stated that the victim alleged Bishop Bell “*molested her in the cathedral as she sat listening to stories* [emphasis added]”.

22. Carol gave a third interview on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016 to BBC Radio Sussex <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03jydzj>. As with the BBC TV interview her voice was not disguised.

23. It is difficult to understand how the Diocese can cling to the confidentiality of Carol’s account, when she herself has waived that confidentiality by the details of the alleged assaults she has provided to the media. No one seeks to uncover her identity, but with appropriate redactions it should be possible for the Diocese to provide details of her account and of the steps taken by the inquiry team to check it so that (in the words of the Master of Trinity Hall) the strength of the evidence against Bishop Bell can be assessed. The Diocese has even declined to say when the servant alleged to have taken Carol to work died, or whether she was questioned before she died. In a matter of this gravity, it is inequitable that the only details of the assault in the public domain are those which Carol chooses to place in the media. In contrast, she declined to give an interview to a journalist who had written defending Bishop Bell.

24. Bishops (like Field Marshals and Prime Ministers) are not immune from false allegations; the example of the former Bishop of Gloucester, forced to stand down before being completely exonerated, was cited in the Lords’ debate on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016. Over recent years there have also been a number of notorious cases of non-judicial inquiries into alleged child abuse which have fallen into grave error. One such example was the inquiry carried out for Newcastle City Council, which led to the maximum award of £200,000 libel damages each to Christopher Lillie and Dawn Reed. At an interlocutory stage in that litigation (on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2002) Mr Justice Eady emphasised the critical importance of close scrutiny of the reasoning process by which such an inquiry reached its conclusion. He said:

*“For all I know [the Review Team’s] motives may have been of the highest; in other words, to serve the public interest and to protect children in the future. But of course we do not have a system where people can be condemned as guilty of any serious criminal offence let alone rape and mass child abuse **without a trial and behind closed doors** [emphasis added]. Anyone who arrogates to themselves such a responsibility must expect, if it is necessary, to*

*have their reasoning processes and their motives brought into the sunlight and subjected to close scrutiny.”*

### **Carol’s Account in the Media:**

25. It is highly significant that in her account in the *Brighton Argus*, Carol provided no details of the circumstances of the alleged assaults which were not in the public domain. She said nothing which she could only have known if the rest of her story was true.

(1) Her description of Bishop Bell was of him “wearing a black tunic thing that came down to his knees and long black leggings”. She added that the leggings “might have been trousers”. There are, of course, numerous published photographs of the Bishop in the episcopal garb of those days -- a frock coat and leggings.

(2) Carol described the room in which the assault had taken place as big, and said there were “books all around”. Again, just as one might expect, there are numerous photographs of Bishop Bell in book-lined rooms, including in his study (see, for example, the frontispiece to the *Otter Memorial Paper No.17* on Bell’s life published in 2003).

26. According to Carol, the pretence used by Bishop Bell to molest her was to read her a bedtime story. This suggests that she was put to bed somewhere in the Palace, whilst her relative (as instructed by the Bishop) got on with her work. There is no record of any employee who “went to work” at the Palace in the evenings. The cook apparently lived in. This makes all the more significant Canon Carey’s conviction that there was never any employee in the Palace accompanied by a child. Carol’s account of the time spent with her relative was that she “went for weekends and school holidays, usually for two or three days at a time, sometimes a week.” It is inconceivable that if a child was spending such a length of time in the Palace, she would not have been seen by the Bishop’s chaplain or chauffeur. But Mr Monk apparently saw nothing untoward and Canon Carey’s recollection is quite emphatic that he never saw a child staying in the Palace.

27. It is not just supporters of Bishop Bell who are likely to feel that Carol’s story does not ring true. In his letter to the late Bishop’s niece dated 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016 Bishop Warner commented in relation to the account in the *Argus* published six days before: “We might indeed wonder about some details”. Regrettably the Bishop fails to recognise that wonderment at some of the details is good reason to question the veracity of the account as a whole, particularly in the absence of independent corroboration.

### **The Alleged Complaint to Archbishop Rowan Williams:**

28. Carol’s account in the *Argus* contained one detail which had not been mentioned before. She claimed that “in around 2010” she had written to Archbishop Rowan Williams, and that all she got in reply was “a ‘sorry this happened’, that was it and that was in an e-mail”. It is unfortunate that Carol did not retain the e-mail; for his part, Lord Williams told the *Argus* that he had no recollection of such an e-mail and that he was “quite certain that [he] saw nothing on this matter”. Since Lord Williams had opened George Bell House just two years previously, it is inconceivable that he could ever have forgotten such an electrifying



allegation, had it been made to him. During his time at Lambeth Palace, Lord Williams did not use a personal e-mail account.

29. After liaison with the correspondence secretary at Lambeth Palace and staff in records, it has been confirmed by the Palace that:

(1) the first evidence of any e-mail from Carol occurred in the autumn of 2012 (not 2010) when the Palace was effectively between Archbishop Williams and Archbishop Welby, and

(2) there was “*no mutually acknowledged correspondence until Spring 2013*”, by which time Lord Williams was no longer Archbishop.

30. In an interview published in the *Mail on Sunday* for 6<sup>th</sup> March 2016 Lord Carey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury between 1991 and 2002, called for a public enquiry into the Church’s treatment of Bishop Bell. In a letter to Mrs Whitley, he had stated that he shared her distress: “*I am frankly appalled by the way the church authorities have treated his memory... The fact is that the Church of England has effectively delivered a ‘guilty’ verdict without anything resembling a fair and open trial. His reputation is in tatters.....*”.

31. Carol responded to Lord Carey in an interview she gave to BBC Radio Sussex on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016. The BBC reporter said that Carol was angry at Lord Carey’s intervention as she had written to him 14 years ago (ie. in 2002) when he was Archbishop. Carol was then heard saying: “*Perhaps he is feeling guilty that he didn’t take any notice of me. Now he wants to discredit me. He doesn’t understand the impact it has on your life....*”.

32. Lord Carey has categorically denied that he ever received such a complaint from Carol, and it is now said on her behalf that she muddled her complaint to the Archbishop in 2012/2013 with her supposed complaint to Archbishop Carey in 2002. However, it is clear that she was aiming her remarks on BBC Radio Sussex explicitly at Lord Carey because of what he was reported as saying in the *Mail on Sunday*. All of this contributes to any assessment of Carol as a witness.

### **The Removal of Bishop Bell’s name:**

33. In the aftermath of the October Statement, Bell House at Bishop Luffa School and Bishop Bell School in Eastbourne have both been re-named. For the time being George Bell House is now simply referred to as “4 Canon Lane”. Other steps taken or proposed are:

(1) Chichester Cathedral Chapter announced on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2016 that as part of the “*re-evaluation*”, they had considered the memorial to Bishop Bell in the Cathedral, adding that “*there are those who find the description of George Bell on the memorial problematic since the announcement of the settlement.*”

(2) Chichester Cathedral volunteers have been given “*comprehensive guidance*” as to how “*to refer to Bell’s legacy while acknowledging the recent settlement and apology by Bishop Martin.*” In a letter dated 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016 from the Chancellor of the Cathedral they were told they should now recognise “*the likelihood that the same man who showed moral courage in opposing saturation bombing, was also responsible for the devastating abuse of a child.*”

(3) The Bishop of Durham has indicated that he suspects that at some point in the future a formal proposal will be made to remove Bishop Bell's name from the Church Calendar.

34. These attempts to extirpate Bishop Bell's name from the public mind are the context in which this review has been undertaken. The signatories strongly urge that before further steps are taken to exorcise his name, there is a proper review of both the process and the evidence which resulted in the October Statement. So far that has not occurred. Justice to the memory of George Bell demands that it should. The point was well put in an article in the *Church of England Newspaper* on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2015 under the damning headline "*The rule of the lynch mob*". The article deplored the "*indecent haste*" to describe Bishop Bell as an abuser, and concluded:

*"There may be a stain on his reputation for a short time but his memory will be cherished again in future especially when we look back at this time of **witch-hunting** [emphasis added] with a proper sense of perspective."*

#### **The members of the group:**

**Desmond Browne QC** was christened by George Bell, and is a former Chairman of the Bar of England and Wales, 2009.

**Andrew Chandler** is a widely published historian of the twentieth-century Church of England and, most recently, the biographer of George Bell. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

**Keith Clements**, is Former General Secretary, Conference of European Churches.

**Lord Geoffrey Dear** is a Cross Bench member of the House of Lords, member of Willersey (Gloucestershire) PCC; formerly Vice Lord Lieutenant, senior police officer and HM Inspector of Constabulary.

**Mark Dunn**, sometime Chairman of West Sussex County council and Sussex Police Authority.

**Frank Field** has been the Member of Parliament for Birkenhead since 1979. He serves on the Ecclesiastical Committee and served as Chairman of the Cathedral Fabrics Commission for England from 2005 to 2015.

**Anthony Harvey**, formerly Fellow of Wolfson College Oxford, and Canon Theologian and Sub-Dean of Westminster from 1982 until 1999.

**Lord Lexden**, is a Conservative Peer and Historian.

**His Honour Alan Pardoe QC** was in practice at the Bar from 1973 to 2003, and was from 2003 to 2013 appointed a Circuit Judge sitting at Snaresbrook Crown Court in East London where he had substantial experience of trying allegations of sexual offences.

**The Very Revd Professor Martyn Percy** is the Dean (or Head) of Christ Church Oxford, as well as of the Cathedral Church of the Diocese of Oxford, and member of the Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Oxford.

**Margery Roberts** is Honorary Secretary of the Nikaeon Ecumenical Trust, Secretary and Treasurer of the Society of the Faith, a charity trustee, writer and churchwarden of a Westminster parish.

**The Revd Philip White** Roman Catholic canonist and diocesan chancellor

## **SOURCE 18**

Letter to the Sussex Press by Martin Sewell, Member of General Synod (Diocese of Rochester)

I write as a member of the Church of England General Synod, a member of a Diocesan Safeguarding Group and a solicitor for 35 years with experience of hundreds of cases of child abuse, having represented victims of child abuse, those rightfully convicted and those wrongfully accused.

The Chichester Council is absolutely right to conclude that the Church has not yet put into the public domain sufficient evidence to enable the Council to draw a safe conclusion that Bishop Bell was guilty of child abuse. This is unfair to all, not least the accuser. The Church's lack of transparency prolongs the agony for all, and its explanation that nothing can be said about its processes, because everything is confidential, is misconceived in law.

Every week, the Law Reports publish detailed judgements concerning cases of sexual abuse.

They routinely describe the nature of the allegations, a summary of the evidence, for and against; the names and expertise of the experts; their points of agreement and disagreement, a summary of the applicable law, the evaluation of contested evidence and the Court findings on disputed fact. All this is done in the public interest without compromising the identity of the accuser to the slightest degree.

In the light of such routine transparency, why does the Church continue in the absurd fiction that it cannot answer the most basic of questions about the processes by which it reached a conclusion in the case of Bishop George Bell? Nobody is asking for clues to identity, only evidence that a process of due diligence has been undertaken.

All we are getting is "Trust me - I am a Bishop" which paradoxically, embodies precisely the toxic culture of deference and unaccountability which dropped the Church into such messes in the first place.

**Martin Sewell**

## SOURCE 19

### *Accusation and Condemnation*

Article by Andrew Chandler in the *Church Times*, 16 May 2016

On 1 July 1937, the Pastor of Dahlem, a comfortable suburb of Berlin, was arrested and taken into custody. It was not unusual for a pastor to be detained in such a way in Germany that summer. But this case was, at once, conspicuous. The pastor was not released.

What could he have done? Every society and age has a sense of what its greatest crime may be, so that the power of allegation itself may be enough to cast a man or woman out from respectable company and make a good name suddenly an embarrassment to all decent people and places.

While the Pastor of Dahlem paced up and down his cell for seven months, party functionaries searched for evidence against him, and presented what they found to the scrutiny of experts of various kinds. A case for prosecution on a number of new charges was diligently prepared.

The pastor was fortunate. Though steadily corrupted by party appointments, and the deepening encroachments of an ideological “People’s Justice”, many of the outward forms of the judicial system of Germany remained substantially as they had been before Adolf Hitler came to power in January 1933. This was not a show trial.

The pastor was defended, and vigorously, by a professional lawyer who was prepared not only to stand his ground but even to break up the proceedings if the counsel for the prosecution misbehaved. The pastor was found guilty only of the first charge made against him: that he had abused his rights in a church pulpit. The other charges were thrown out. He was fined 2000 Marks, and, as he had already spent longer in custody than the penalty for the crime, he was released at once.

It was heard that the pastor had inspired the personal hatred of Adolf Hitler, and Hitler was determined to settle the score. On leaving court, the pastor was promptly abducted by the secret police. He was later traced to a concentration camp at Sachsenhausen.

This ruthless intervention provoked an immense international outcry. The pastor was Martin Niemöller, known and admired outside Germany. His treatment showed that power mattered more than law in Germany in 1938. Across the western world, Niemöller’s cause was taken up by indignant journalists, senior politicians, lawyers, and scholars who wrote of him in their newspapers, journals and books.

An English bishop, George Bell, at once used his position to rally support for a man whom he regarded as one of the great Christians of the age. Bell knew that he was not alone in his campaign. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Cosmo Gordon Lang, saw issues of natural justice with a very sharp eye, and hated to see it denied. Around these two committed men and their allies, a great strategy of protest began to emerge.

Bell preferred to work away behind the scenes. In April 1938, he visited Germany and made a point of finding Niemöller’s wife, Else. This meeting clearly left a deep, and disturbing, impression on him. By now her husband was a prisoner in solitary confinement, denied visitors, denied conversation, receiving only two letters a month. When she had visited him, only once: as a “special favour”, she had found him “dazed”.

Bell who had already given sanctuary to many pastors and their families in Britain, offered the family a holiday there. She seemed hardly able to understand the idea of it. While in Berlin, Bell also visited the British ambassador, Sir Neville Henderson. “Henderson”, Bell noted sceptically, “deprecated demonstrations! Don’t press the Church — wait till the storm rolls by — things will right themselves.” Bell was unimpressed.

In July 1938, Bell marked the first anniversary of Niemöller’s detention at a service of intercession in St Martin-in-the-Fields in central London. By August, he was working on the creation of a new “Guild of Prayer” for all those who were in prison and all who suffered in Germany and Austria. Subscription would cost 3d. a week, but there was also a yearly rate. Clearly Bell did not think that Niemöller would be freed soon (life fellowship could be had for £10.)

But here Bell encountered an objection. The vicar’s secretary at St Martin’s wrote: “the Vicar feels, in common with us all, that this ‘special guild’ approaches too nearly to the likeness of a political effort. We may well have the German Ambassador refusing to come.”

Another example of the Church’s ambivalence broke out in the correspondence columns of *The Times*. The Bishop of Durham, Herbert Hensley Henson, got into a fight with the Bishop of Gloucester, Arthur Headlam, who thought that the German state would not have moved against Niemöller unless he had given them reason. He told Henson that it was more important to understand the offended authorities than it was to criticise them. Henson exploded at this. As far as Headlam was concerned, Henson did not know his place. As far as Henson was concerned, a bishop should know an offence against justice for what it was. In 1938 episcopal collegiality had its limits.

Through the long war, which broke in September 1939, the Bishop of Chichester remained constant to the imprisoned Pastor of Dahlem. Every year, a special service of intercession took place for him. Little news of any kind from inside Germany reached him, and what news emerged was bleak and bitter. When so many perished, how could it be hoped that one such as Martin Niemöller could survive?

In fact, Niemöller did survive. When peace came, he was reunited with his wife, and restored to his friends. And in October 1945 George Bell met his friend again, in Stuttgart.

It was not the pastor but the bishop who would die first. In 1958, Martin Niemöller paid tribute to his friend, ally, and advocate in a programme broadcast by the BBC. “George Bell”, he remarked, “was a Christian who was led and driven by the love of Christ Jesus himself. He couldn’t see somebody suffering without suffering himself. He couldn’t see people left alone without becoming their brother.”

If he were alive now, what would Martin Niemöller say to the Church of England? For it is not the Pastor of Dahlem but the now long-dead English bishop who stands accused, and of the greatest crime known to contemporary society.

Much on this has already been published in the columns of this paper. Those who are responsible have repeatedly emphasised that care is due to the person who has accused Bell of assaulting her as a child. But they should also ask themselves that if innocence, not guilt, must be proved, how may any innocent man or woman feel safe, particularly when an accusation may be made years, even decades later, with no necessity to prove things in court, no need for conventional proof, little consistency and no corroboration.

Various assumptions can be made: that there is no smoke without fire and even that good people do wicked things; that the responsible authorities always act thoroughly and credibly, even

when they work in secret; that experts are trustworthy, even if the basis and character of their expertise is unknown; even that good people often do wicked things. Would any of that have reassured a bishop such as Henson? Perhaps such things will always happen to somebody else, and leave us undisturbed. What did Martin Niemöller once famously observe about that?

Archbishop Söderblom, who admired George Bell profoundly, once remarked that this was a Bell which never rang without reason. Now the reason is a new one: it is ringing or those men and women — often in public service, school teachers, practitioners of medicine and pastoral care — who find that it is not innocence but guilt that is first assumed; who struggle as best they can to clear their names; who face suspension from work, contempt, isolation and even violence in the communities that they serve; even exclusion from their own churches.

These things are not going on in some despotic foreign state. Even if we have forgotten all the other reasons why George Bell matters to us in 2016, this is one reason we might acknowledge. Rather than suppress his name even challenging its place in the Calendar of the Church of England - we should cling to it for all we are worth.

## SOURCE 20

George Bell Group Paper by Desmond Browne QC and His Honour Alan Pardoe QC, 7 June 2016

### **IS THE ACCOUNT BY “CAROL” AS TO HOW SHE WAS TAKEN OFF BY BISHOP BELL TO BE READ A BED-TIME STORY CONSISTENT WITH THE FACTS ?**

1. The Diocese of Chichester claims that the state of the law prevents them from making public details of Carol’s complaint such that the credibility of her story may be judged. (The Support Group believe that view of the law to be mistaken for reasons set out in the analysis by HH Alan Pardoe QC and Desmond Browne QC on this site). It is only the fact that Carol herself chose to describe aspects of her alleged abuse in an interview given to the **Brighton Argus** published on 3 February 2016 that allows outsiders to judge any part of the truth of her account.

2. In her account given to the **Argus** Carol claimed that “*under the pretence of reading her a story, [Bishop Bell] would take her to a private room*”, where the assaults would take place. In contrast, in an interview broadcast on **BBC TV South** on 9 February 2016 the allegation was that the Bishop “*molested her in the cathedral [emphasis added] as she sat listening to stories*”. That account contained little detail, and this analysis will concentrate on the detail contained in the **Argus**.

3. The account published in the **Argus** headlined Carol’s words: “*My strongest memory is seeing this figure all in black standing on a stair, waiting.*” Her account explained:

*“If you go into the Bishop’s kitchen there’s a wooden stair that comes down and he used to wait on there, half way down it.*

*And then he’d go, ‘Oh, Elsie, I’ll take Carol and read her a story.’*

*He used to take me off down this long corridor and there was a big room at the end and he used to take me in there.*

*There were books all around the room. And then he'd shut the door."*

4. It is clear that the "Bishop's kitchen" to which Carol was referring is not the domestic kitchen used by the Bishop but the mediaeval Bishop's Kitchen on the west side of the Palace complex. The reason this is clear is that the article states that the counselling of Carol (for which the Diocese paid) "included a return to the scene of her abuse, which she hated." According to the article the counsellor had taken Carol back to the scene two years before. The journalist described Carol as "visibly upset" as she explained:

*"The lady who was giving me counselling, actually took me to the Bishop's kitchen.*

*The Cathedral had some sort of pottery exhibition on there, and she said 'we'll go, and see how you feel'.*

*Well I got in there, and I said 'Can we leave now?'. We had to leave."*

5. The author of the article stated that "Carol's voice only broke once in the course of a three hour interview, when she recalled how it felt to stand back in that room, at the foot of those stairs." It might be thought open to question what good was served by the counsellor taking Carol to the alleged scene of the abuse. It confirmed nothing, neither provided any proof of the allegations. It also gave rise to a risk that what she was shown of the lay-out of the Palace may have served to confirm Carol's self-belief that she had been assaulted there having been led out of the Bishop's Kitchen.

6. The two-storey mediaeval Bishop's Kitchen has been the site of annual pottery exhibitions since 2007: see the photographs on:

<http://www.chichesterweb.co.uk/zbishopskitchenk.htm>

<http://http://www.southernceramicgroup.co.uk/exhibitions/exhibitions/htm>.

7. The short point relied upon by the Support Group is that the Bishop's Kitchen does not have a staircase leading out of it. There is no stair case on which Carol from the Bishop's Kitchen could have seen Bishop Bell standing. In the Support Group's Review of 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016 we pointed out that:

*"The Bishop's Kitchen (and for that matter the staircase **outside** it) was not part of the Bishop's domestic residence or where he worked. Away from the door to the domestic quarter, it was a quite separate complex, at that time in regular use by the Theological College, its staff and students."*

8. Canon Adrian Carey (now in his nineties) was a student at the Theological College between August 1947 and August 1948, and he confirms that many of the students' lectures were held in the Bishop's Kitchen.

9. Further recent research by Dr Andrew Chandler, Bishop Bell's biographer, in the Church Commissioners' archives at Bermondsey has shown that at the relevant time only 11,000 square feet of the Bishop's Palace building was occupied and used by the Bishop and his household. The remaining 5,300 square feet (including the Bishop's Kitchen) was on a 14-year lease to the Theological College. From April 1947, when the students moved in, the two

parts of the building were (to use the Church Commissioners' word) "severed". A door between the two parts was replaced with an oak partition wall. The other door between them remained so that the students could worship in the chapel. This door was on the ground floor and led straight into the passage where the chaplain's office was situated so that he could monitor the main door.

10. Mr Chandler points out there are a number of reasons why Bishop Bell would not have been in the area of the Bishop's Kitchen:

(1) He was only able to use the Bishop's Kitchen for particular events by applying to the Theological College Council.

(2) He had neither need nor reason to be there. The area held by the College was private and obscure from the rest of the Palace. Living and working at the far end of the Palace, Bishop Bell would not have known when Carol was in the Bishop's Kitchen.

(3) At that time if the Bishop was regularly in the College part of the premises, he laid himself open to liability for a share of the costs. This is far from fanciful; each side watched the other closely – indeed there was even a wrangle over a meter for the organ in the chapel.

(4) Finally, the nearest staircase outside the Bishop's Kitchen led only to students' rooms, one of them along a long corridor. Following the replacement of the old door with the oak partition, there was no entry into the domestic part of the Palace from this staircase.

11. In its statement of 22 October 2015 the Diocese stated that none of the "*expert independent reports*" it had commissioned had found any reason to doubt the veracity of the claim. It is a matter of regret that the Diocese has said so little about its investigation of the alleged abuse that outsiders cannot know whether its experts considered any of the highly relevant matters set out in this analysis.

## **SOURCE 21**

George Bell Group Paper by Desmond Browne QC and His Honour Alan Pardoe QC

### **IS THERE A LEGAL JUSTIFICATION FOR THE DIOCESE OF CHICHESTER WITHHOLDING THE DETAILS OF THE CLAIM MADE BY BISHOP BELL'S ALLEGED VICTIM ?**

1. It is obviously critical to any assessment of whether on the balance of probabilities the late Bishop George Bell sexually assaulted the woman now known as "Carol" to be able to consider the details of her account or accounts of what occurred. The Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, the Rev. Dr Jeremy Morris, was one of a number of signatories to a letter to the *Church Times* in November 2015 hoping that something of the expert independent reports relied on by the Diocese would be released, appropriately redacted, to demonstrate the strength of the evidence against Bishop Bell. The Diocese has, however, refused to disclose any of this



material even in redacted form. The Diocesan Secretary, Gabrielle Higgins, has cited a number of provisions to justify this stance. They are:

- (1) The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992.
- (2) Civil Procedure Rules (“CPR”): r.31.22.
- (3) CPR r.32.12.
- (4) Para. 9.2, Practice Direction: Pre-Action Conduct.

2. In our view not one of these four provisions justifies the course taken by the Diocese, which has resulted in seriously handicapping the efforts of those wishing to see Bishop Bell’s name cleared and his reputation restored.

***The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992:***

3. By reason of **S.1(1)** and **s.5(1)** “*where an allegation has been made that an offence to which [the] Act applies has been committed against a person*” [emphasis added], it is a criminal offence to publish or broadcast the name, address or picture of that person during their lifetime, if it is likely to lead to their identification by members of the public.

4. **S.1(2)** deals with the situation “*where a person is accused of an offence to which [the] Act applies*” [emphasis added]. It is then a criminal offence to publish any matter likely to lead members of the public to identify that person as the person against whom the offence is alleged to have been committed.

5. The offences alleged by Carol are of serial indecent assault over a four-year period from 1948 to 1952. So the first question is whether those are offences to which the Act of 1992 applies. The answer to this question is to be found in **s.2**, which contains an exhaustive list of the statutory offences to which the Act applies. The earliest statute listed in point of time is the Sexual Offences Act 1956, which of course post-dates the end of the alleged period of offending.

6. It is a cardinal principle of English criminal law that criminal offences are not created retrospectively – in other words, the Sexual Offences Act 1956 did not create an offence under the Act in relation to conduct prior to the Act’s commencement date. It is irrelevant what statute might have covered such conduct prior to 1956, since **s.2** is a complete (or exhaustive) list of all the offences to which the Act applies. For that reason neither **s.1(1)** or **1(2)** are offences to which the 1992 Act applies, and there is no question of the commission of any offence under **s.5**.

7. **S.1(2)** is concerned with what is sometimes called “jigsaw identification” – in other words, the publication of details (the word in the statute is “matter”) which would be likely to lead the public to identify Carol. However, **s.1(2)** is only applicable where a person is **accused** of a relevant offence. “Accused” in this context means formally accused, not merely being made the subject of an allegation. The word is defined in **s.6(3)**, which makes it clear that it means the initiation of criminal proceedings, for example, by laying an information. Since Bell died in 1958 long before Carol made any allegation against him and since for obvious reasons

there could be no criminal proceedings against him falling within **s.6(3)**, there is no question of any offence under **s.1(2)**.

***Civil Procedure Rules: 31.22 and 32.12:***

8. The Diocese's statement of 22 October 2015 referred to the settlement with Carol having been reached after "a thorough pre-litigation process". It is now clear that there were never any proceedings between Carol and the Diocese and the action was settled without any litigation being initiated. For that reason neither **r.31.22**, nor **32.12** can have any application.

9. **R.31.22** relates to documents compulsorily disclosed by a party to proceedings at the discovery stage in the litigation. It rehearses the very familiar common law principle that those documents may only be used for the purpose of use in the same proceedings, unless the court orders otherwise. The rationale of the principle is to afford protection to a party who has had to disclose documents in litigation under the compelling power of the Court. It is plainly not applicable in the present case.

10. **R.32.12** protects witness statements served in proceedings. Until they are put in evidence at a hearing, they may not be used without the leave of the court for any purpose other than the proceedings in which they are served. Here there have been no proceedings, still less any witness statements, so the provision does not apply.

***Para.9.2 Practice Direction: Pre-Action Conduct:***

11. In her capacity as Diocesan Secretary, Ms Higgins (a non-practising barrister) told a correspondent that she personally would have thought that this provision was relevant. She cited the provision from the 2014 edition of the White Book (the practitioners' procedural Bible) at p2667, but she acknowledged that by the 2016 edition the provision had been dropped from the Rules. However, even were the 2014 provision still in force, it would not be applicable.

12. The former provision cited by Ms Higgins reads as follows:

*"Disclosure. Documents provided by one party to another in the course of complying with this Practice Direction or any relevant pre-action protocol must not be used for any purpose other than resolving the matter, unless the disclosing party agrees in writing."*

13. Carol's letter (or letters) of claim, together with the expert reports on her claim, cannot be documents supplied to the Diocese in the course of complying with the Practice Direction or any relevant pre-action protocol. The letter of claim is no more than that – a letter setting out her claim. It might or might not have led to the activation of the pre-action protocol. That would depend on the reaction of the Diocese to the claim. The mere fact that the parties subsequently chose to follow the Practice Direction would not retrospectively convert the initial letter or letters of claim into a document supplied by Carol in the course of complying with the Pre-Action Practice Direction. The old provision was concerned to protect documents (or evidence) which might be supplied to support the prospective claimant's case or undermine that of the prospective defendant. The policy behind the provision was not applicable to a mere letter of claim.

14. As Ms Higgins acknowledges, the provision has been removed from the version of the Practice Direction operative in 2016. This is not a casual omission: the reason for the change appears to have been an appreciation that (unlike at the disclosure stage in an action) pre-action disclosure – precisely because it is *pre-action* – is made voluntarily and not under the compelling power of the court. Accordingly there is no need to afford the claimant the protection provided in relation to documents which the court has *compelled* him or her to produce.

***Conclusion:***

15. The letter or letters in which Carol set out her claim are vital to any assessment of the credibility of the allegation that Bishop Bell was guilty of serial sexual assault of a young child. His reputation has been damned by the Diocese’s public statement of 22 October 2015, yet by reason of misconceived legal arguments the public has been prevented from judging for itself the material on which the Diocese acted.

16. Redaction would protect Carol’s identity, and the argument that the documents should be disclosed becomes overwhelming when one takes into account the three occasions when Carol has provided the public with her own version of the details of the alleged assaults. She has done this in a lengthy interview in *The Argus* of 3 February 2016, a BBC Television South interview of 9 February 2016 (in shadow but with her voice undisguised) and in a BBC Radio Sussex interview (again with voice undisguised) on 8 March 2016.

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