

A Statement by Lord Carey to the Independent Review led by Dame Moira Gibb

I was Archbishop of Canterbury from April 1991 until Oct 31 2002.

The role of Archbishop of Canterbury entails the following responsibilities:

Bishop of the Diocese of Canterbury

Joint President of General Synod

Senior Bishop of the Province of Canterbury

President of the Anglican Communion

Member of the House of Lords

Royal, political and constitutional responsibilities

Ecumenical and Inter-faith roles.

To exercise this ministry I had the assistance of a small team of bishops and clergy at Lambeth Palace and in the diocese of Canterbury, headed by the Chief of Staff at Lambeth.

In the historic circumstances of the time, the Church of England had just voted to ordain women to the priesthood. This was the greatest challenge I faced as Archbishop of Canterbury with the very real possibility of a major schism in the Church of England. The country was in the midst of a Royal divorce and I made two lengthy overseas visits – Sri Lanka and South Africa - at the height of these events.

In October 2015, following the sentencing of Peter Ball I issued the following statement:

“I support Bishop Paul Butler’s apology to survivors of Peter Ball’s abuse. I greatly regret the fact that during my tenure as Archbishop of Canterbury we dealt inadequately with Peter

Ball's victims and gave too much credence to his protestations.

“Allegations by some that my actions amounted to a cover-up or collusion with the abuser, are wrong. I have always insisted upon the highest standards of holiness of life from all who are ordained. But it is undoubtedly the case that in the years since the allegations came to light, the Church of England has needed to put into place much better procedures, as have all public institutions in society, to ensure that victims receive justice speedily and properly. In the past we failed many victims and allowed abusers to flourish in ministry. I hope that as a result of all these changes we are now a safer church for the young and the vulnerable.”

In terms of the present Review I have to acknowledge that this statement of apology and culpability – especially the widespread failure of the church in considering the victims - should have come much sooner. As I have learned more about the specific crimes committed by Peter Ball and became more aware of issues to do with ‘grooming’ and safeguarding of the young and the vulnerable, my regret has grown. For all of the authorities involved in the Peter Ball case there has been a history of failure.

Firstly, we undoubtedly let down the victims of Peter Ball. Secondly, the Church of England enabled Peter Ball to continue in ministry. There were some restrictions placed on his ministry but these were insufficient.

By way of context, I think I am not exaggerating in saying that at the height of events in 1992 and 1993, the Peter Ball case represented a kind of ‘perfect storm’ at least for those of us involved at Lambeth Palace. These allegations emerged at

the same time as a potential constitutional crisis and impending threats of schism.

Furthermore the circumstances involved a diocesan bishop whose twin was also a diocesan bishop. He therefore exercised a continued influence through his brother in spite of his resignation. The Balls presented the church with a unique, unprecedented and probably never to be repeated situation. Their evident success as gifted charismatic communicators and successful evangelists from the Catholic tradition meant they were widely admired.

Much has been made of the many letters written by the Balls supporters to police and prosecuting authorities, it has to be said that the Church too was subjected to a sustained campaign by and on behalf of the brothers. We did not recognise at the time that this was probably an organised campaign rather than a spontaneous outpouring of support. Peter Ball was a plausible character and was highly manipulative. He deceived many of us who dealt with his case.

After his admission of guilt through accepting a police caution, I regret greatly that I did not put him on the Lambeth caution list. I understood at the time from the Ball brothers and his therapist that he was very ill and, as a retired bishop, he was likely to have only a limited public ministry in future. I could have placed more restrictions on his ministry, though there were limits, and as time went by I had an ongoing battle with the brothers who, increasingly, resisted the attempts to limit Peter's public ministry. Bishop Michael Ball insisted that Peter was much in demand in his own diocese of Truro, as indeed appeared to be the case.

The past is another country. In 1992 our understanding of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults was woefully lacking. We had no child protection procedures or safeguarding advisers until later in my time as Archbishop. Our disciplinary procedures have also noticeably changed and become more effective. I am certain now that the Church of England's procedures are much more robust and properly orientated towards the protection of children and vulnerable people.

Lord Carey

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