

METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND

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Dr John T Alderdice
Alliance Party
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Dear Dr Alderdice

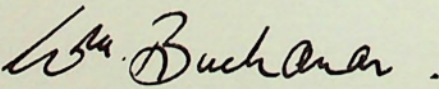
Thank you very much for your letter of 5 April. I agree with everything you express in that letter, and indeed have always admired the balanced and sensitive leadership which you give, not only to your party, but indeed to the whole country as a political leader.

When Peter Brooke announced in the House of Commons that there was now a political way forward in talks, I was thrilled, as were the vast majority of people in this country. I immediately wrote to him, to encourage him and assure him of my prayers. I also gave an interview to the BBC, part of which was transmitted, making clear my support, and indeed I know I speak on behalf of most Methodist people.

As I have travelled around this island during my Presidential year I have discovered many positive signs of hope. The old negative attitudes are being eroded, and there is a new will to fill the political vacuum in which the people of violence thrive. I will be writing a piece in the Methodist Newsletter, in which I will be urging Methodist people to pray daily for you all as you engage in this difficult and sensitive process. God's grace and wisdom will need to be in good supply to us all at this crucial time in our history. I hope and pray that the negative, recriminatory, 'getting one over' attitudes which are already being verbalised, will not ruin the way forward.

I assure you of the love, prayers, and support of the Methodist Church, to you and all those engaged in the political process.

Yours in His Name



W T Buchanan