

# Reverend Richard Coles

Former 1980s pop star (The Communards), Radio 4 broadcaster and cleric

- Available For:
- Awards Hosting & Presenting
  - After Dinner Speaking
  - Keynote Speaking

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## About

The Reverend Richard Coles is a Church of England priest in the quintessentially English village of Finedon, Northamptonshire, where two of his ancestors were Vicars in the seventeenth century. However, in complete contrast, more than a quarter of a century ago Richard was the instrumentalist half of pop band The Communards, together with Jimmy Somerville.

During the 1980s The Communards had three UK Top 10 hits, including Never Can Say Goodbye and the biggest-selling single of 1986, Don't Leave Me This Way. This therefore affords him the unique position as being the world's only Vicar to have had a number one hit record.

Richard is co-presenter of BBC Radio 4's Saturday Live and also a regular contributor to 'Pause for Thought' on the Radio 2 Chris Evans Breakfast Show. He is a frequent guest panelist on shows such as Have I Got News For You, Would I Lie To You? and QI. Often described as Britain's most famous vicar, Richard was the inspiration for the main character in the BBC hit comedy Rev, a programme for which he also served as consultant. In 2017, Richard was a contestant on the BBC's BAFTA winning prime-time show Strictly Come Dancing, and the year previous he was a semi-finalist on Celebrity Masterchef. He has a keen interest in classical music, art and ceramics, and co-hosted the BBC's Big Painting Challenge alongside Mariella Frostrup in 2017 and 2018.

Richard Coles grew up in Northamptonshire and attended a minor public school where he was a chorister and, to his horror, realised he was gay. As a young adult he subsequently moved to London to work as a session musician in theatre. In 1983 he joined pop group Bronski Beat as a sax player where he met Jimmy Somerville. The following year, Jimmy and Richard left to form The Communards.

Success came fast and they had the UK's biggest-selling single of 1986, but Richard was not at ease with the sudden fame. He was the gawky, bespectacled, musically trained geek who physically towered over the extrovert Somerville, but was otherwise lost in his friend's shadow. Friction grew, and it was against this backdrop of drug-fuelled arguments that Richard invented a deception which ultimately drove him away from his career in pop music and towards a more fulfilling vocation to God.

In 1990, after attending a mass at St Alban's, Richard Coles was suddenly inspired with a new found faith. He took a theology degree at King's College, London, before returning to Northamptonshire where he began to seriously consider taking holy orders. After ten years as a Roman Catholic he reverted to Anglicanism, and in 2005 Richard was ordained into the Anglican priesthood and now lives with his civil partner David, also a priest, in their vicarage which is gradually being destroyed by their four dachshunds.

With a particular interest in housing communities, Richard serves as a board member of Wellingborough Homes, providing social and affordable housing in the borough where he lives, and in 2017 became honorary Chancellor of the University of Northampton.

Reverend Richard Coles' work as a broadcaster, priest and his formative years in the music industry make him a delightfully entertaining, articulate and very funny after dinner speaker; recalling many extraordinary and humorous anecdotes of his journey from pop-star to priest; Richard is also regularly in-demand to host corporate and industry award dinners.

## Video



## Testimonials

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On behalf of the Chairman, Executive Committee and members of the ISBA, may I simply say an enormous thank you for taking the time to come and speak to us at our conference dinner in the Celtic Manor Resort. It was good to meet you and I hope that you enjoyed the occasion. We certainly appreciated your most amusing speech, which undoubtedly contributed to an outstanding dinner for our members and guests. The Executive Committee and Secretariat have absolutely no doubt that one of the key elements underpinning this success is the quality of speakers we have for the various events. It has been generally accepted that this been our most successful conference and the feedback we have received so far from our members and guests has been outstanding. Your after-dinner speech undoubtedly helped contribute to this.

General Secretary - Independent Schools' Bursars Association.

“

Thank you as always for your support in making the BMA Foundation awards night a success. I have had lots of positive feedback about Reverend Richard Coles from our guests. They commented on how usually speakers have a set 5 minutes about their background, another 10 on their current work and then may be 5 minutes with a tenuous link to the cause of the night, but with Richard he had clearly put much thought into what he was going to say and he threaded in the link between medicine and religion extremely well. Some doctors said it reaffirmed for them why they decided to study medicine. Richard was very easy going and approachable and our guests enjoyed meeting him very much. As you know this is a very high profile event and we think Richard Coles is one of, if not the best, speaker we have had.

Nicky Jayesinghe - Head of Corporate Development, British Medical Association.

“

We were delighted with Richard Coles' presentation, it was amusing, well delivered and appropriate for the day. We also appreciated the efforts he made to network with our guests before his presentation.

“

Reverend Richard Coles, as you would expect, produced an excellent start to our morning session at conference and it quickly became apparent how popular his BBC radio programme is amongst our delegates. His friendly, matter of fact approach was appreciated by everyone.

Ellen Silvey - AXA Corporate Solutions Assurance.

It was a pleasure to host him and I would appreciate your conveying to him my best wishes.

Brian Stoyel - Rotary International Director.

“

On behalf of the M&G Pride Committee, I would like to express our thanks and appreciation both to Reverend Richard Coles and you for a fantastic anniversary event. We really enjoyed the evening, Richard's talk, and the really great conversation with everyone.

Colette Comerford - Employer Branding & Inclusion Manager, M&G Investments.

“

Reverend Coles was a pleasure to work with, he was an event managers dream. He rehearsed as requested. Delivered what we asked for and more. It was great to have a host who didn't just read from the script. He added in a number of funny one liners which related to the audience.

Informa.

“

After dinner speaker, the Reverend Richard Coles was absolutely brilliant! We had a really good evening, he was really well received by the audience but ahead of that, he mixed with us all before dinner and weaved in things he had clearly picked up from conversation into his speech which was just. He absolutely made the evening.

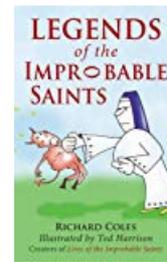
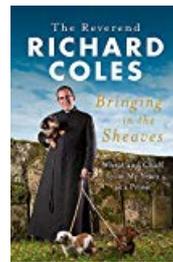
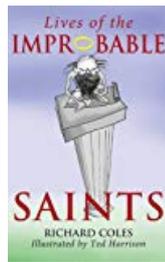
The Chief Fire Officers Association.

“

I just wanted to thank you so much for all your help and involvement in last night's talk. Reverend Richard Coles was absolutely brilliant and with Cerys [Matthews] interviewing him it was a perfect fit. Everyone was engrossed with his brilliant and often very humorous stories, just such a charming man to listen to with a fascinating story. We have received such lovely feedback from both members who attended and staff.

Fiona Hollands-Hurst - Music and Member Events Manager, The Arts Club, Mayfair.

## Books and DVD's



## Exclusive Interview



TAGS FOR REVEREND RICHARD COLES

Humour / Comedy

Satire

Television Presenter

Radio 4

Overcoming Adversity

Mental Health

Strictly Come Dancing

Inspirational

Radio Broadcaster

Arts

Arts & Culture

Interviewer

Music Industry

Academia

80s Musician

MasterChef

Diversity & Inclusion

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