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PARSON AND PARISH

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THE ENGLISH CLERGY ASSOCIATION

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PARSON & PARISH

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“serving the people and their parishes”

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While the magazine seeks to uphold the aims of the English Clergy Association, the views of the contributors are, of course, entirely their own, and do not necessarily represent those of the Association, its Editorial Committee, its Council, or its members in general.

I recently read a newspaper obituary of a paediatrician whose work both overseas and at the Great Ormond Street Hospital was reckoned to have “helped save countless children’s lives in the developing world”. What a splendid achievement—and we may thank God for him and many others. He was the youngest of seven children of an Anglican vicar, and remained a committed Anglican. At Marlborough, so the obituary informed us, he was thought to be dyslexic and “judged not clever enough to enter the Church”. Instead he read Natural Sciences at Cambridge and began his distinguished medical career—a new variation surely to the saying *clerus anglicanus stupor mundi*.

There will be some, I suppose, who will argue that all you need is sincerity to be an effective cleric. But is the tradition of learning among the clergy to count for nothing? Sincerity in living the faith is clearly an important vehicle of witness. But should not irreligious fervour, religious fervour and fervid indifference be met by reasoned exposition of the faith? The clergy are meant to say the Daily Office **and** to study, according to the Ordination Services.

The Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan (now Lord) Sacks, has recently analysed the current fragmentation of our society in *The Home We Build Together* (Continuum: 2007). The title reflects his rejection of earlier models of assimilation and multiculturalism: the first leads to alienation through dominance (the “country house” model), the second to fragmentation (the “hotel” model). Instead, he argues for a model of building a home together, bringing the distinctive gifts of different groups to the common good to achieve integrated diversity within a framework of shared values.

He is also concerned at the excessive politicisation of relations between citizen and government, arguing that civil society is needed to provide neutral spaces for interaction and association in order to promote “civility”, responsibility and a sense of public duty. In this way also the greatest enemy of liberal democracy, namely individualism, is countered, because civil society involves all sorts of mutual, moral commitments.

The alternative is dependence on government, which is the way to tyranny. Civil society covers all sorts of associations, from sports clubs to local history societies; it is notorious that totalitarian societies see them as compromising loyalty to the state. One of the sticking points of course is that many groups in civil society seek public funding, and so the way is open to state interference. In that context, “political correctness” has mutated thoughtfulness into thought control.

The Chief Rabbi’s own experience of a British narrative includes the fact

that “Britain is where the son of a Polish immigrant who had to leave school at the age of fourteen could go to university and be treated by others as an equal,” with supervisors who included an Old Etonian, a fox-hunting Tory and a lapsed Catholic who was a principled atheist. “Not once did they attack my beliefs, faith or way of life.” He learned from them “that the pursuit of truth demands qualities of character as well as of intellect”.

Not of course that the concern for the loss of civil society is new. In 1996 for instance David Selbourne, author of several books including *The Principle of Duty* (1994), wrote that

The greatest threat to our liberties lies not in the supposed denial or disappearance of our rights—a mere fantasy—but in our failure to fulfil our civic and social duties to ourselves and to others...The best way to greet the millennium will be by means of a powerful social and ethical movement, cross-faith and cross-party, armed with principles and policies directed to preserving the civic order.¹

I wonder if in the light of the subsequent 13 years Selbourne would count himself a disappointed millennialist.

Frequently associations in civil society are built around assemblies of faith, as both Sacks and Selbourne state. This brings us back to one of the questions which sparked off these musings: the role of the Church of England in helping to provide a common narrative for our country.

In similar vein, Chancellor Mark Hill’s editorial in the *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* of September 2009 is timely. Writing against the background of recent constitutional changes, often spun as “reform” and frequently “knee-jerk”, he calls on the Church of England not to be “caught on the back foot” but to take the initiative in “[seeking out and articulating] new ways of being the *established* Church”, informed by history, ecclesiology and serious thinking on constitutional matters.

Not only are religious parties of continuing influence in European politics; so in Britain “faith” questions are at the forefront at the same time as “secular” influences seek to dismiss faith as anything from anti-human delusion to no more than life-style choice, an alternative leisure pursuit.

For historical reasons, the Church of England still has a particular role as an inclusive national Church; it has to live with the criticism that it is so broad that it has no cutting edge. The problem with “compromises” or “settlements” is that they are by their nature multiplex, in an equilibrium which can be disturbed by sudden removal of one element.

Equilibrium, however, does not of itself imply ossification. Indeed, dynamic

equilibrium allows things to move forward as systems adapt: to pursue the model, it is a system in rigid, overconstrained equilibrium which will shatter. To refer to Chancellor Hill's editorial again, "constitutional convention has never stood still and, as with an elaborate tapestry, pulling a loose thread in one part may inadvertently distort another."

There is then a role for the Church of England. There can also be a role for Anglicanism in the more general conversation, provided its historical and theological breadth is not suppressed. Anglican Churches after all have never claimed to be more than "part of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church", and the evolution of Anglicanism involves inculturation and the play of the contingent as much as does the history of any other part of Christendom.

The thought of Saint Augustine of Hippo has had and continues to have an incalculable influence on all parts of western Christianity, chiefly perhaps in discussion of nature, grace and sin. A book on Augustine by the late Professor Dr Henry Chadwick was discovered among his papers and has now been published,² with a foreword by the distinguished scholar of late antiquity (and himself a biographer of Augustine) Professor Peter Brown.

In his foreword, Brown writes

It is part of the greatness of Chadwick as an expositor of Christian thought that his sense of responsibility to the present, as a patient listener to the past, made him so magnificently even-handed as a judge.³

And he directs us to Chadwick's own comments

[Augustine's] misfortune was to become treated as a towering authority in the history of western Christianity in a way that he himself would have strongly deplored. ...At least it may be said that Augustine himself had a deep abhorrence of being treated as a person whom people wanted to follow without pondering his reasons.⁴

Henry Chadwick's contribution to theology and to the ecumenical movement is widely acclaimed as profound and judicious, and he also represents the best in Anglican learning. We thank God for him.

Peter Johnson

Notes

¹ *The Times*, 14 August 1996

² *Augustine of Hippo: A Life* (Oxford University Press, 2009)

³ *ibid.* p. xiv

⁴ *ibid.* pp. 166–7

DOUBLE JEOPARDY

Secularism, Militant Islam, and the Christian Faith

Are Britishness and national cohesion sufficiently defined by certain values?

Where did the notion of 'nationhood' come from?

There is the need to see things as in themselves they really are.

To take into consideration the vital, long-standing influence of the Judaeo-Christian Faith.

For example:

- "Rendering to Caesar" has contributed to the understanding of giving each sphere of life its due;
- The doctrine of the Holy Trinity, with its order and mutuality, has informed our law-making and nourished the major institutions of our society.
- The historical influence of Aristotle alongside the Bible has led to the sense of the person as the moral agent, and to the exercise of conscience.

Consideration of these two theological and social influences assumed greater importance with discovery of the New World.

How were indigenous populations to be treated? As slaves?

But the Dominicans held the line that persons are moral agents.

Everyone has been born naturally free, free to have property, freedom of movement, and freedom of belief.

No one can be coerced into accepting Christianity.

Here we have the notion of Human Rights in its infancy.

According to Locke, Natural Rights and Fundamental Freedoms have their source in the notion of the image of God in human beings, and not from secular thinking.

- And then there was the huge debt of the Enlightenment to Christian ideas.

The Evangelical Revival in the 18th and 19th centuries, with its foundation in the Scriptures, inspired great social commitment, reform, as in the abolition of the Slave Trade, and of slavery itself.

At the beginning of the 19th century there was an evangelical-enlightenment consensus on what made for cohesion, and nationhood.

And this began to dissolve only in the 20th century, especially in the 1960s.

Why?

Was it “the long withdrawing roar of the Sea of Faith”? (Matthew Arnold).

Or was it that Christian discourse came to a sudden end in the 1960s after the many challenges to Christianity from the 19th century - (Feuerbach etc.)

Something did happen in the fifties, sixties, and seventies that changed the scenery.

The Faith stopped being passed on in the home.

Future generations were not imbued with the Faith as before.

Also there was Social Revolution: -

Marxist thinkers targeted vital social institutions: Church, Parliament, Universities; all subjected to deconstruction.

Apart from the social revolutions there was the revolution in sexual behaviour.

So did this change occur over a long period, or was it sudden?

Whatever the answer, the result now is a vacuum, characterised by a particular prevailing thesis that no philosophical, moral, or religious presuppositions should be brought to bear on policy formation.

And all this at a time when there has been an upsurge of Islamism in this nation, which is in itself an ideology.

Is it possible to cope with such a strong ideology in view of our own moral and spiritual vacuum, along with the current dissolution of the family?

e.g. we now have no public agreed doctrine of marriage.

Successive legislation has undermined the need of a child for a father and a mother.

Research points to the need for both sexes in the bringing up of children.

The net result is that there is less and less respect for the human person, which derives from lack of knowing what a person is.

This is a very dangerous vacuum; some say that the situation is irreversible.

Rapid change is making people ask fundamental questions.

For example: how to treat the very beginnings and endings of life.

You cannot answer these questions without a transcendental view of human nature.

What view of the human person are we to have?

Do the USA ‘inalienable rights’ include the right to life?

Public Policy has to take its source in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, or we will become a manipulated society, at the mercy of opinion polls and mere utilitarianism.

- What about **Equality**?

The Equality ‘industry’ does not now know why people should be equal.

Equality ideas are grounded in Christian common origin.

19th century racism tried to undermine Biblical understanding of equal human freedoms.

Acts 17:26: “Out of one blood God made all nations to inhabit the earth” was hugely unpopular in the 19th century.

Our public life has to be grounded in the Biblical view.

- **Liberty** was forged in a Christian context.

If you secularise this, it is lost as the state grows in power.

- **Safety** we derive from Biblical shalom/salvation/wholeness.

For the last 40 or 50 years there has been increased focus upon the safety of the individual;

but little attention has been paid to the overarching protective nature of the great Christian institutions.

- Instead of the Christian virtue of **Hospitality**,

mutuality, welcome, we have developed multiculturalism, which in turn engenders benign neglect and mere tolerance.

Very dangerous because it ghettoises ; and this is what has happened.

- Much discourse in the subject of **History** is overtaken by historical amnesia.

Far too often both sides of a story are not considered.

For example: the Slave Trade; but there were Christian liberators.

Public life may espouse Christian values when convenient, but, some say, the Faith is no longer necessary. How long will the 'bank balance' last?

Gordon Brown holds the view that all religions produce the same values. Hardly so.

A false liberalism...

In Islam, fasting is social:

In Christianity, fasting is private.

What can we do about all this? We can be sure that the Westphalian Treaty is dead.

We cannot now separate secular/religious worlds.

It is not now whether faith should have a place in the formation of public policy; but **what** place in the current vacuum.

(e.g. The new Muslim head of BBC religious broadcasting, was announced the very next day. May 12th, Daily Telegraph)

Persuasion is our weapon, not coercion. Britain has a long tradition of respecting conscience; but recently this has become more and more ignored, especially in relation to religious believers.

Autonomy of law should be respected, but with respect for conscience.

Let there not be infiltration of our law with *Sharia* law.

Our Law is Judaeo-Christian in origin. *Sharia* holds quite different assumptions.

Any attempt at merger would be very damaging.

For example, if incorporating family *Sharia* law...

Bigamy would be a crime for some and not for others.

Divorce, custody of children and financial provision are very different in each tradition.

- Now therefore, we are in **Double Jeopardy**.

Militant secularism has caused a loss of Christian discourse in public.

Now we are faced by an incoming different vision for public life.

The Church has been everywhere co-opted into the secular vision, rather than being prophetic.

Values have now become free-floating.

There is a neglect of inculcation of virtues. Natural virtues must be fed by Christian virtues.

Synodical government has been modelled on the secular model from 1969, rather than incorporating Bishop, clergy and people under God.

The vacuum is the problem, because something will fill it.

Everything of real value derives from Jesus Christ.

With no vision of the human person, the people perish, prey to utilitarianism and uncertainty.

The above are summary notes of the points discussed in the annual address given by the Bishop of Rochester, the Rt Revd Michael Nazir-Ali, to members of the Association and of the Patrons' Consultative Group on 11 May 2009 at St. Giles-in-the-Fields.

The Editor expresses the gratitude of the Association and of readers to Mrs Margaret Masding for her work in preparing these notes.

FREEHOLD & COMMON TENURE

The Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure has passed Parliament and received the Royal Assent. Parts are now being implemented. The Regulations have been made. The Code of Practice (binding) is being prepared.

Have you read them?

Do not believe everything you may be told, of course. Your informant may be well-intentioned, but wrong, or wrong-headed.

Your elected Council advises those with Freehold of Office not to agree to surrender it, and not to go over to the basis of Common Tenure, under which you may feel you could well be a mere serf. This is our advice to all Archdeacons, Rectors and Vicars, Deans and Canons, and even Bishops themselves.

When the Measure is fully in force, future appointed such persons will all be on Common Tenure, so far as Office is concerned. But the freehold of Parsonages will remain vested in Rectors and Vicars, something for which we campaigned, and where the Archdeacon of Berkshire and others in Synod were so effective.

SENIOR APPOINTMENTS SURVEY

David Phillips

In recent decades, and possibly for much longer, there has been discrimination against classical evangelicals in the Church of England and in particular in relation to appointment to what are called senior posts. By classical evangelical I mean those who are evangelical and remain convinced that Scripture does not permit women to be presbyters.

The Pilling Report, Talent & Calling, which looked at some issues to do with senior appointments acknowledged the problem and stated:

'we have to recognize that there are two groups of members of the Church of England who believe that clergy of their views are not treated fairly and equally when senior appointments are made.' (Section 4.4.1)

The "two groups" are traditional Anglo-Catholics and classical evangelicals.

The point has been made to the Archbishops' and Prime Minister's Appointments Secretaries and in correspondence with Bishops. However, in addition to classical evangelicals feeling that they are discriminated against there is the perception that they are actually unwilling to accept senior appointments.

It was therefore decided to conduct a survey of classical evangelical clergy in order to add some statistical substance to impressions and anecdote.

First we identified just over 400 parochial clergy who we believe to be classical evangelicals. We believe these people have self-identified as fitting our definition of classical evangelical. It was intended to include a few retired clergy but not those in first curacies or non-stipendiary posts. In fact a few curates and NSMs did slip into the list. Since we thus excluded a large number of curates and since there are undoubtedly others who slipped through our net of classical evangelicals I believe that the actual number ought to be between 500 and 600, possibly larger.

Therefore, the initial group represents at least 5% and possibly more than 7.5% of the stipendiary clergy of the Church of England. They are at least 6% and possibly nearly 10% of the stipendiary men, bearing in mind that this is the pool from which Bishops have been chosen to date.

Of these 400 we selected 200 at random to whom we sent a simple survey form. Almost exactly one half (98) of those surveyed responded, fewer than we hoped but a decent number. It felt a bit like Gideon preparing the army to meet the Midianites.

Profile

More than two thirds of the respondents were incumbents, Priest-in-Charge or Team Vicar. The remainder were a mixture of assistant clergy of some sort, in non-parochial posts or retired. About two thirds of the respondents were in their 40s or 50s. Those younger than this would not have been considered for senior posts yet, whilst those who were older might have been in the past but it would be unlikely in the future. We made no attempt to assess the present responsibilities of the respondents. However, amongst the original 400 are pastors of some of the numerically largest congregations in the country who lead large staff teams and who exercise wide-ranging, even international, ministries.

Expectations

What might we expect from such a group of people? At the bare minimum these clergy represent 1 in 20 of the stipendiary clergy. On this basis we would expect to see that 2 are among the 44 Diocesan Bishops, 2 among the 44 Cathedral Deans, 3 or 4 among the 60-70 Suffragan Bishops and 5 or 6 among the 110+ Archdeacons. That is at least 13 among the current 260 senior posts. A more realistic expectation would be around 20 in senior posts and possibly as many as 11 among the Diocesan, Suffragan and Area Bishops. In fact, in our original list there are just two self-identified classical evangelicals among the senior posts.

To add substance to the above it should be noted that there have now been around 200 appointments of Bishops since 1992. Some of these of course are of a Suffragan becoming a Diocesan. Of these only one has been of a classical evangelical and many will remember the uproar in certain quarters when his appointment was announced.

From these figures it ought to be abundantly plain that there is a problem. The first aim of our survey was to collect further information to illustrate the discrimination that is going on. However, it is also possible that there are classical evangelicals who have been asked to take senior posts but who have refused. In addition if the perception exists in the wider church that classical evangelicals are unwilling to take such posts this would provide some small justification for people not being asked. There is anecdotal evidence that this has happened but understandably no-one is able to break confidences and give actual instances. Therefore we hoped that the survey would indicate whether there is evidence that this has happened or that the perception has a solid basis.

Results

Of the 98 respondents only three indicated that they had been considered in any way for senior appointments and only one had actually been appointed. With such small numbers it is hard to know what to make of these figures, nevertheless it would seem to indicate that people are not just being appointed but not being considered. At any given time just over 3% of stipendiary clergy are in senior posts, although remember that our survey excluded first curates and included a few retired folk. I don't know how many clergy on retiring have ever been in a senior post but if any reader wishes to do a little random research using your copy of *Crockford* please let me know.

What did respondents feel were the barriers to them being considered?

First, and frequently cited is our opposition to the ordination of women. This is understandable. People will have different views but there is the perception that a classical evangelical will be unable to minister in senior roles because of their opposition to women as presbyters and the fact that they would have to minister alongside such women. This is a problem too for Anglo-Catholics who are also being discriminated against in senior appointments but for whom there are existing Dioceses, such as Chichester, London and Blackburn, which have had traditional Anglo-Catholic leadership.

One respondent to the survey remarked that his Bishop had told him that there was more sympathy for Anglo-Catholic opponents because so many evangelicals have accepted the ordination of women that those who refuse to do so are felt by others to just be awkward.

Secondly, there is the perception that we are too narrow. Or, to be more accurate there is the assumption that narrow is bad and broad is good. One respondent wrote: "*We aren't perceived to be inclusive enough and therefore wouldn't be able to function as a bishop to a whole diocese*". Given that 'broad is the way that leads to destruction' I am not sure this is something we should worry about and it appears that our respondents were generally not worried. At the same time many are prepared to minister in settings that are not evangelical if they are free to proclaim Christ and teach the Scriptures. Therefore, this perception is largely irrelevant. Remember too that there are many fine Christians from the past who it seems could not be Bishops in the Church of England today and one might particularly evidence the Apostle Paul who would definitely be considered too narrow. If Apostles could no longer be leaders in our Church what right do we have

to call ourselves part of the Apostolic Church?

Are classical evangelicals willing to consider senior appointments?

Most respondents were decidedly cool about the prospect of being considered for senior posts. Around a fifth would categorically not consider any such appointment and only a third positively stated that they were willing to consider any. The remainder were largely unwilling but not entirely closed to the idea or already felt they were past it, and need not worry about the possibility. This could well be a factor in why such appointments have not been made, but no respondent had actually been in the position of turning down an approach and as indicated about only three had any reason to think they had been considered.

Why are classical evangelicals reluctant?

First, some naturally felt that they would not have the right gifts for the particular ministry, and this is to be expected in any group of honest clergy though some may well have the gifts but just cannot see it in themselves.

Secondly, many felt that the roles are very unappealing in the sense that they do not embody the ministry to which classical evangelicals feel called. I stressed this a few years ago in a verbal submission to the Pilling Group and the subsequent report did mention the fact though recommendations for reform were beyond the remit of the Group. Episcopacy in particular needs to be much more rooted in the local Church, and in pastoral ministry. All these Senior roles are seen as involving far too much administration and too many committees. There were calls at the General Synod in July to reduce the number of senior posts but nobody seems willing to stop piling more work onto them.

Related to this is the apparent expectation that because Bishops have a civic role then evidence of having engaged in such beforehand is seen as important. This disadvantages those who have immersed themselves in parochial ministry, especially in large churches and seems to favour those in other posts.

Thirdly, many respondents felt that there were expectations of those in senior positions which they could not in conscience meet. For example, "*Many Bishops exercise a ministry of compromise which is unbiblical.*" It is felt that some Bishops turn a blind eye to immorality and gross error, but this surely does not mean all Bishops must. The problem is that if someone takes a stand others may castigate them and if they run into opposition the general climate will be used against them to portray them as extreme rather than just doing their duty. It is not an appealing prospect but since

when have those called to be ministers of the gospel let this deter them?

Fourthly, asked why senior posts are unappealing one respondent wrote: *Fear of being isolated by fellow evangelicals who regard senior clergy as necessarily compromised because they must deal with non-evangelicals.* Sadly people do complain, I have done it myself, against brothers in senior posts. There may be good reason but we must be especially careful before we speak against those in such roles.

Conclusion

Overall the survey appears to confirm that there is discrimination against classical evangelicals in senior appointments. We are excluded, even ignored, from certain settings and this has fostered a sense of alienation. Despite having hammered away on this for some time I think Bishops and others listen and then ignore what has been said. Increasingly classical evangelicals are no longer prepared to tolerate this situation.

At the same time I do feel that classical evangelical clergy need to be more open to appointment to such posts. We have to ask whether we are creating unnecessary barriers but at the same time be determined not to compromise on essentials. Ultimately however all this demonstrates that reform is necessary not just of some processes but of the fundamental nature of these senior posts.

David Phillips is General Secretary of Church Society.

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IN ALL THINGS LAWFUL AND HONEST

*Alex Quibbler, Parson & Parish's legal agony uncle,
responds to recent questions arising in parish life*

QUESTION: I've got a couple of questions, as our parish's Electoral Roll Officer, about the Roll, following this year's annual revision. First, one of our PCC members has objected to the Roll's being published at the back of our church on the grounds that it invades her right of privacy (by giving her address) whereas I thought it was a public document open for all to see. Secondly, a diocesan official has told us that we need, each year, to give them a notification certifying the number on the Roll, and that a copy of this notification must be fixed to our church door for at least 14 days after the diocese has been notified. I've neither heard nor witnessed such a procedure ever take place in any parish in which I've lived. I wonder what you think?

I agree with you that the Roll is, in effect, a public document, but that doesn't mean it has, generally, to be left on display in an open church where it could, possibly, be misused for unsolicited mailing of the electors, or even for gaining information by possible confidence tricksters or others of evil intent. In fact, the Church Representation Rules require that it only "be available for inspection by *bona fide* inquirers": rule 1(1). So it could, for example, be kept in a locked vestry, and produced for genuine requests. The exception to this is that Roll does have to be "exhibited" for at least 14 days, following the annual revision or six-yearly formation of a new roll, on or near the principal door of the church, and normally one would expect both names and addresses to be listed on the Roll. However, the Rules do give a loophole which may help your elector concerned about breach of privacy, for "the roll shall where practicable contain a record of the address of every person whose name is entered on the roll, but a failure to comply with this requirement shall not prejudice the validity of an entry of the roll": r.1(11). So, it would seem to me that, as long as you as the Electoral Roll Officer have all the duly-completed application forms for enrolment (which, in those cases based on residence in the parish *must*, of necessity require an address to be given) safely in your custody, then in certain individual cases you could omit the address of someone who specifically asks—at least, for the duration of the public exhibition period.

Your other point about the "certification of the notification" – or is it "notification of certification"?! – of numbers sounds tedious and probably is rarely carried out, but is actually required by rule 4. No later than 1st June, you, or your PCC chairman, vice-chairman or secretary must notify the diocesan secretary of the number of names on the Roll as at the date of the annual parochial church meeting, and a copy of that notification does indeed need to be affixed at or near the principal door of the church (etc, etc).

QUESTION: I'm a parish priest who has been told by our diocesan office that all the clergy must allow our rural deans to collect photocopies of our passports, so that the diocese can fulfil the new rules about not employing illegal migrant workers. I have objected to this, not least because I am not employee, but my suffragan bishop has told me that there is no option but to obey because "it is the law" and the alternative would be a heavy fine imposed on the diocese. Is this right?

Your diocese is ill-informed. What this is to do with is the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, which came into force at the end of February last year. Under this Act an employer commits a criminal offence if he knowingly employs an illegal migrant worker: section 21. In addition, an employer can incur a civil penalty (enforceable by the Secretary of State as a recovery of debt) if he unknowingly employs an illegal migrant worker and has not, before employing the worker, checked and copied various documents (this is where the passport comes in): s.15. If the employer has made the required checking and copying of documents before he takes on the employee, and makes the required repeat checks for ongoing entitlement, then he has what is termed (by the Act itself) an "excuse" to avoid this penalty.

There is no legal requirement, as such, for an employer to conduct document checks, but guidance (Home Office Border & Immigration Agency *Comprehensive Guidance for Employers*, February 2008) "recommends" it in the case of *all* prospective employees, and especially to avoid claims of racial discrimination if, say, document checks were only conducted on those from certain ethnic communities. It is perhaps also worth pointing the obvious, that the Act imposes no duty on prospective employees to have to produce certain documents (but obviously the possible offer of employment is likely to fall away), and in the case of employees who have produced documentation for checking and copying but who subsequently, in repeat checks, refuse to produce documents then there is still no breach of any statutory duty, although there may, says the *Guidance*, be grounds for dismissal.

It is important to grasp that the provisions about checking and copying certain documents only apply to *prospective* employees; if someone is already in employment then it is pointless to demand the production of documents as it will not help the employer establish the statutory excuse referred to above. So, yes, your diocese would be advised, in making any *future appointments* of employees, say of those to work in the diocesan office, to follow the *Guidance* under the Act.

However, as you rightly point out, the parochial clergy are *not* employees, even though the courts have shown a greater willingness to treat them as

such for some purposes. The Act makes it quite clear that "employment" in the sections about employing illegal migrant workers means "employment under a contract of service or apprenticeship, whether express or implied and whether oral or written": s.25(b). If that is not good enough for your diocese, then point them also to the *Guidance* which gives help on this point and suggests that a person is only an employee if:

- The employer can require the worker's personal service; and
- The employer can control when and how the work is done, what tasks have to be done and where the services are to be performed; and
- The employer supplies the tools and the other equipment needed to do the work; and
- The employee is paid by the hour, week or month and receives overtime pay.

This in no way describes long-suffering ecclesiastical office holders living on modest stipends in our parishes and who have to make all their own arrangements for cover, and so there is absolutely no way that future incoming parochial clergy to your diocese would need to be subjected to documentation checks (although, of course, the position with regard to sector ministry clergy would be different as usually they *are* employees). To demand it of existing parish clergy is both to misunderstand their employment status and the provisions of the new statutory rules and guidance in relation to illegal migrants. What is being asked of you is offensive, intrusive and sadly another manifestation of our surveillance society and "jobsworth" approach of those in our bureaucracies, from which, regrettably, the Church is no exception.

Readers are invited to continue sending in their questions about parish law and practice to the Quibbler in forthcoming issues of the magazine. All names and addresses are, of course, withheld. Whilst every effort is made by Alex to ensure the accuracy of his responses, advice should be taken before action is implemented or refrained from in specific cases.

STAYING AND FIGHTING OUR CORNER

A sermon preached by the Revd. Peter Mullen, 25th October 2009

Pope Benedict surprised the Archbishop of Canterbury this week by making an audacious and generous offer to traditional Anglicans. He is offering us full communion with Rome while agreeing that we may retain our traditional Church of England forms of worship, our King James Bible and Book of Common Prayer. Even Anglican priests who are married will be made welcome. This morning I should like to tell you what I aim to do, but first it is necessary to outline the background to this sensational development.

We have to go back to the 1950s. In that decade the Church of England was, like the rest of the country, enjoying the post-war boom. Church attendances were up. So were Christenings and weddings. Vocations to the priesthood likewise. In the working-class Leeds parish where I grew up, there were three of us offering ourselves for ordination. There were three parties in the Church of England: High, Low and Broad. The one thing they held in common was that they all worshipped using the King James Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. It was a blissful time to be a member of the church, and to be young was very heaven.

Then came the 1960s and everything changed. First, there was the theological revolution. Bishop John Robinson wrote his iconoclastic bestseller *Honest to God* which he advertised in *The Observer* newspaper by saying, Our image of God must go. In chapter six of this book he also derided the traditional morality of the Ten Commandments and argued instead for something he called situation ethics which meant making moral decisions on the hoof according to the principle of love. This quickly became known as the new morality – just as quickly described by traditionalists as the old immorality in a miniskirt. It really amounted to doing what you liked. Of course it suited the swinging sixties – let it all hang out – generation very well and chimed nicely with the Beatles' song *All you need is love*.

But Robinson was only the start of it. There followed books of radical theology which went way beyond *Honest to God*. There was Paul van Buren's *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel* and Thomas J.J. Altizer's *The Gospel of Christian Atheism*. A group of British theologians published a title *Objections to Christian Belief*. The mood had changed suddenly from the confident faith of the 1950s to the widespread feeling that the cat was out of the bag and that no truly modern person, in the age of satirical television programmes, the lifting of the Lady Chatterley ban, the pill, sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll could be a traditional Christian believer. As the conservative poet Philip Larkin put it ruefully:

Sexual intercourse began in 1963 (which was rather late for me)
Between the end of the Chatterley ban and the Beatles' first LP.

Close on the theological revolution came the liturgical innovations. The King James Bible and the Book of Common Prayer were sidelined and replaced – some of you may remember – at first by the booklets Series one, two and three and then by the clapped-out, tin-eared doggerel of the Alternative Service Book. The radical bishops and synod described the publication of the ASB in 1980 as the greatest publishing event in 400 years. Twenty years later, the same hierarchy, Hitler-style, actually banned the ASB and gave us instead the even worse book *Common Worship*. Even this excrescence is barely relevant today as many parsons download any liturgical trash they happen to fancy and print out ephemeral service sheets. One result of all this is that no one under fifty now knows any prayers by heart.

What has actually happened over these last forty years is that the church has embraced the secular agenda: the so-called progressive sexual and social policies, feminism, anti-sexism, anti-racism, idealistic internationalism and the dogma of universal human rights. The Church of England effectually resigned. As T.E. Hulme said, No institution is ever defeated until it is penetrated by the ideas of its enemies. The church has been so penetrated. We have imbibed the notions and policies of the secularists whose consistently declared aim is the obliteration of Christianity from public life.

One interesting sidelight on all this is that the modernising bishops of the 1960s and 70s were engaged in enthusiastic negotiations for unity with Rome. But when it became a choice between that unity and ordaining women to the priesthood, feminism triumphed over ecumenism and the so-earnest, so-sincere, talks with Rome were at an end. This was the key moment in the secularisation of the Church of England. The contemporary secular commitment to anti-sexism trumped the authority of ecclesiastical order.

Our church is now governed by the theological and liturgical iconoclasts, by people who, in the traditional sense, are really unbelieving: feminised multiculturalists who see the Christianity they promised at their appointment to defend as an impediment to that supposed wider understanding based on the contradictory alliance between world religions and secular humanism. Any traditionalist in today's dumbed-down, traduced, secular and faithless church will be persecuted by the apostate hierarchy which now rules us.

It is against this background then that we must understand the Pope's offer. He is opening his doors to disaffected traditional Anglicans and saying, in effect, Look, here you can return to a believing church, to a church which

has not overturned its own doctrines nor adopted the secular moral and social orthodoxies. What will be the outcome of this extraordinary gesture? It is widely reported that perhaps 1000 traditional priests will leave, many taking their parishioners with them. No wonder the Archdruid of Canterbury has been going around with a face like a wet week. For be ye well assured, the powers of the bishops have been shaken and the modernising Synod is brought low.

Friends and colleagues are urging me to take up the Pope's offer and, at a stroke, relieve myself of the burden of having to accept the authority of modernised ecclesiastical superiors with whom I do not have a single thing in common. Moreover, they tell me, these friends and colleagues, that, if I do take up the Pope's offer, I shall be able to avail myself once again of all the traditional forms and doctrines in which I was brought up, to which I was ordained priest thirty-nine years ago and which I love. So what shall I do?

The Pope is offering me all those beautiful and sacred teachings, unsullied by the poisonous deposits of modernised, debunked Anglicanism. Isn't this just what I crave? Shouldn't I be grateful to the Holy Father and accept his generous hospitality without further delay? I would surely then be escaped from the sheer nastiness of the modern bishops and the creepy non-believing political clique which runs the General Synod.

When all these good things are offered to me by the Bishop of Rome, I hope I do not sound ungracious when I reply, But I have these things already. I believe that I was validly ordained. Whatever the hierarchy of the collapsed Church of England commands, I can refuse. I have the scriptures, the King James Bible and the Prayer Book. I have the ancient creeds. I have the glorious teachings of St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas, St Anselm. I actually don't spend a moment of my time attending to the pronouncements and outpourings of the secularised and failed modern Church of England. I study our ancient and traditional sources. I luxuriate in the superior richness of the great Anglican divines: Donne, Hooker, Lancelot Andrewes, William Law. And the outstanding Christian men of letters who formed our English life and literature: Samuel Johnson, Coleridge, T.S. Eliot, C.H. Sisson. I worship to the music of Tallis, Palestrina, Byrd, Victoria, Mozart, Haydn and Vaughan Williams. I am by no means deprived. Of course I do this knowing that to our debased hierarchy all this stuff is only so much elitism and irrelevance. Well, by their fruits ye shall know them. And I know that we are better sustained by those superb English Christians than by the crowd of illiterates among the modern bishops and in the synod.

Still it is not comfortable being a traditionalist serving under the ignorant, vicious modern authorities. But I'm not in it for comfort. I don't shirk a fight. Half my life has been spent in vigorous opposition to the begetters of our

current decadence since 1980 when I edited with David Martin the book *No Alternative* against the Alternative Service Book. And I am not fighting some solitary battle. I have you, my people – an informed, devout and affectionate congregation. When C.H. Sisson was faced with the problem of what traditionalists ought to do, he said:

What then is the position of the theological rump in our now lay, secularised clerisy? There are three possibilities. They can stay and fight their corner, struggling for an intelligibility which might come again, and will come, if it is the truth they are concerned with. They can sit on pillars in some recess of the national structure, waiting for better times. Or they can let their taste for having an ecclesiastical club carry them into one or other of those international gangs of opinion — that which has its headquarters in Rome or that which has a shadowy international meeting-place in Canterbury. In any case it will be a political choice that is being made. For my part, I shall prefer those who stay and fight their corner, content to be merely the Church in a place.

That is my position too. I will stay and fight my corner. St Michael's is this church in this place.

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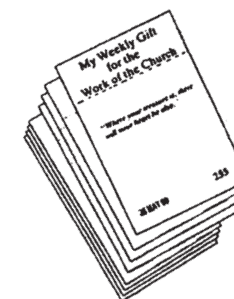
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BOOK REVIEW

PRACTISING THE PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER David Pawson

Terra Nova Publications ISBN 9781901949582 £9.99

What can be more important than our task of nurturing the prayer life of our congregations? Every clergyman needs to be a teacher of prayer. Of course, this theme transcends denominational boundaries, and how heartening it is to find a well-known free church minister, an internationally renowned expositor of Scripture used to addressing large groups of ministers, who knows and understands the rich heritage of common prayer which is part of the Anglican 'treasury' we want to open up to all.

In this passage, David Pawson addresses the issue of 'lengthy prayers':

The amount of time a congregation, or even a prayer meeting, can concentrate on one person praying is very limited. Somebody has reckoned that a typical congregation cannot concentrate for more than one minute. I do not know what research they did for that – I know some that can continue much longer – but what they were saying is that after one minute in a public service the first person will begin to wander away in thought, and will soon be followed by others. The compilers of the Book of Common Prayer realised this and produced common prayers deliberately for people to share in common, and such a 'common prayer' does not usually last much more than a minute. There was a very sound principle for that. They knew that it is better to have many short prayers than one long one. The trouble is that in reacting against the political imposition by the government of a Book of Common Prayer, the free churches reacted against both brief prayers and book prayers, and I think that is sad. There are treasures, riches of prayer in books, that we may miss. We have long extemporary prayers, and think they are more spiritual than those short Collects from the Book of Common Prayer, some of which are so brief yet so deep

Maybe that is an aspect of our common prayer which we hadn't thought about or valued enough. This is a book to encourage all who are willing to embark on the great adventure of prayer. It helps anyone who prays to know that they are not alone. Here is a real antidote to a sense of isolation: we are reminded vividly that the whole company of heaven is present when we pray.

The stance is orthodox, reminding us that normatively prayer is to the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit, and the meaning of this is explained clearly.

The distinctive character of Christian prayer is affirmed. Pawson summarises a key section thus:

Christian prayer has Christ in the centre of it. I have five things to say about Christ in this context, things the Christian has in his prayer that no-one else has:

1. The Christian has the teaching of Christ about prayer, and there is no better teaching.
2. The Christian has the example of Christ in his prayer, and there is no better example to follow.
3. The Christian has the blood of Christ in his prayer, and there is no more powerful plea than the blood of Jesus.
4. The Christian has the intercession of Christ. Even as he is praying, Christ is praying for him, for he ever lives to make intercession for us.
5. Finally — and this is unique, and makes the privilege of Christian prayer so much more wonderful than the privilege of other prayer — we have the name of Christ to use in our prayer. Could you ask for more? That is what makes Christian prayer so different from other prayer...

Later chapters helpfully look at 'Prayer with the saints'; 'Prayer by myself'; 'Prayer for others'; and 'Prayer without hindrance', the latter concentrating on some of the perceived barriers and difficulties encountered in prayer.

Difficult frequently asked questions are not avoided and the practical flavour of some of the answers to common difficulties is illustrated by this perceptive little passage:

To people who have said to me, "I pray and I never get any immediate answers; I never get thoughts coming back to me from my prayer," I have usually said: "Can I suggest to you a prayer to which you will get an answer within two minutes? It is a prayer that He loves to answer." I say, "Pray this prayer: 'Lord, show me something in my life that you don't like.'" Now if you have problems with unanswered prayer, try that one. You will be astonished how quickly he responds, because he wants you right with himself!

This is a book that any Christian can be helped by: the mature will be reminded in a lively and thoroughly readable way of the great truths we profess; the beginner will find here a clear, orthodox framework and a practical guide, seasoned with fascinating human examples from the author's tremendous experience; the preacher will find much solid biblical material to digest and use to lead others to discover for themselves how great a joy and privilege it is to be a person of prayer.

Review contributed by a member of the Association

CHAIRPIECE

If twenty centuries of stony sleep were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle, then I, who try to be awake, in this age of pervasive assaults last year not only upon upon Christmas but increasingly upon the open practice of the faith of the Established Church, am not surprised, albeit saddened, at the latest assault on the Red Cross as the universally recognised symbol of compassion even in war and terror. Some of our bishops and leaders seem to aid and abet this attack in the name of politically correct equality. Some, like the Bishop of Rochester, deserve a wider audience, in seeking to expose what is going on. The Notes we publish elsewhere in this magazine give some indication of the powerful and incisive nature of his Address to the Association and our friends, Patrons, Churchwardens and others in St. Giles in May. Next year, 10th May, we shall hear Baroness Cox, another fearless fighter for freedom.

So I look at the bad dream that our dear C. of E. is becoming, and wonder. With the enactment of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure, we face the abolition of future freehold of office, although it is very satisfying to be able to report that the work of the Archdeacon of Berkshire and others succeeded in persuading Synod that our campaign to save the freehold of their property for Incumbents was right — and, of course, the growing financial crisis in the Church of England made our arguments even harder to resist, if what would have become diocesan property had been made suddenly to be vulnerable to creditors. The Parson's Freehold is in this respect an ironic protection to a diocese's ability to remain effective at the parochial level! It safeguards the Church's real work. The parishes are the cutting edge.

Now, coupled with reducing relative levels of Pension, and the requirement for a full pension of 40 years service, with retirement not before age 68, I look at the plethora of House-for-Duty advertisements for filling parishes, and worry. Is the future to be one of two separate classes of clergy?

Will there be, on the one hand, in Parishes (except for the rare big ones able to hold on, often "training" parishes), largely house-for-duty ("retired") people, with additional ordained (self-supporting) ministers, many of them local only, together with part-time (mostly women) clergy, with the traditional Parsonages sold during Vacancies and periods of Suspension of Presentation, so that half the heart is torn out of parishes? The modest dwellings substituted, on the grounds that "that's what people want to retire into", or, "clergy like to live like everyone else and not keep a public house for the parishioners", are no substitute, not least because so many parishes are quite unable to afford to build or rent, let alone man, a Parish Office.

One notes that between ten and twenty ordinands this year cannot be

ordained to Titles because dioceses lack the money to pay Curates' stipends to them. What is their future? Was God not calling them?

So, such deacons as we may ordain apart, are we to abandon the true Parish system at a time of Pastoral Reorganisation and operate with Deanery Ministry Teams? Will there be full-time Deans of Mission (a.k.a. Rural Deans), with a largely voluntary Team, while hardcore stipendiary central diocesan clergy direct the show? That would be a bureaucratic nightmare, which the Terms of Ministry Regulations to be made next year will be able to reinforce, at great cost, making ample work for the Human Resources Adviser and the new Diocesan Adviser on Advisers.

I don't like it. The Parson, with his intrinsic jurisdiction and rooted Ministry to all-and-sundry, will be gone. For good or ill, and usually still for good, the Parson, provided he obeys the law, is answerable to God, not the diocese, for how he exercises the Ministry to which God has called him. He is obliged, of course, to obey those commands, lawful and honest, which the law empowers the Bishop to impose upon him. This is very different from Roman Catholicism, and is a peculiar English liberty.

So in future computers will analyse "returns" and identify "failing parishes".....Big Brother is watching you. Read (and watch carefully the implementation of) the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Ministry) Measure, and the associated legally binding Regulations and Code of Practice.

Speed of communication pressurises us all, of course — as one contemplates Parliamentary turmoil, one recalls that, in 1688 when the government arrested the Seven Bishops, it was seven because that was as many as the Archbishop of Canterbury could find in a fortnight. Seven Bishops went to the Tower, including Ken (Bath and Wells) and Sir John Trelawney (Bristol) — whether of not the Song of the Western Men reflects more than R.S. Hawker's fertile mind I wouldn't know; but read Lord Macaulay. Reflect too, that as a Member of Parliament enters the House, the last huge painting on the left portrays the Seven Bishops' acquittal, despite every effort of government apparatus to secure conviction..... This is Liberty. This is England. This is our Faith.

John Masding

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