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Crossway

THE MAGAZINE OF CHURCH SOCIETY

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EQUIPPING GOD'S PEOPLE TO LIVE GOD'S WORD

Living in Love and Faith and the CofE

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Keith Sinclair considers what will be the impact of this summer's Lambeth Conference of Bishops on the continuing Living in Love and Faith (LLF) process in the Church of England.

As you read, the English Bishops will be meeting during the autumn to discern a way forward that they can recommend to the General Synod meeting in February 2023, so please pray for them.

You may be wondering what all this means for your church or parish. For many the LLF process seems remote and unconnected with the immediate demands of mission and evangelism in post-Covid England. In the parish I'm honoured to be part of in East Manchester (St Clement's Openshaw), there has been limited opportunity to consider the LLF course outside a small group, and this in a parish where those with same-sex attraction are able to speak freely and are honoured greatly.

For many the LLF process seems remote and unconnected with the immediate demands of mission and evangelism in post-Covid England.

So what should we think and how should we prepare, especially as the Church of England, through the Bishops and General Synod, may propose a way forward following some Provinces in the Anglican Communion which have introduced same-sex blessings or marriage.

Helpful resources

Here are two resources you and your PCC may find helpful and important.

First the CEEC (Church of England Evangelical Council) are producing a series of short videos to help PCCs and small groups in parishes to think through what may be proposed. You can access them on the CEEC website.

Four films are already available covering subjects like 'Can we remain silent?', 'Starting the conversation', 'How important are our differences?', and 'Are services of blessing for same-sex couples a possible compromise?' There will be more films in September and October, including learning from others in the Anglican Communion. At CEEC, we are committed to keeping evangelicals across different traditions together, so please look at these resources and encourage others to do so as we pray and contend together for the future of the Church of England.

Second is a resource which will help you with that learning from the Anglican Communion right now! A significant grouping of Anglican Provinces (that's like the Provinces of Canterbury and York in England, with their own structures of Archbishops, Bishops and

parishes) is the Global South (GSFA); among the Global South are the Provinces of South Sudan, Chile, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Indian Ocean (see below). During the Lambeth Conference they issued a Communique which you can read on their website.

It is, I believe, a very important commentary on the current state of the Anglican Communion and I hope you will take time to read it all. I've taken the liberty of copying an extract to give you an idea of what the future of the Anglican Communion looks like from a Global South perspective. It is taken from section 6 on the Future:

> **(6:g)** So, the Communion as it is today is not in a healthy, working state. The road to recovery and spiritual vibrancy is long, but it must start with a critical decision on whether Scripture, as canonically and historically interpreted, is an indispensable basis of our common life as one Communion of Churches. In the words of Elijah, the Communion cannot afford to 'go on limping between two different opinions' (1 Kings 18:21).
>
> **(h)** We are not content to go on with endless dialectical conversations about what Scripture requires of us as if there is not a fundamental 'givenness' to God's call on all of us (Micah 6:8). There is an inherent unity in the New Testament's proclamation of the Gospel ('the kerygma') and its ethical teachings ('the Didache'). They belong together

Prayer Diary: October

Please pray every day that God's blessing will be on Church Society to sustain it and guide its ministry.

1 Give thanks for the ministry of Rod Thomas as Bishop of Maidstone, and for his farewell service at All Souls, Langham Place today.

2 Airmyn* (Sheffield) – Vicar, Philip Ball.

3 Akeley* (Oxford) – Rector, Hans Taling. We're thankful for progress in receiving a Faculty for our new church building, but hope we're not too late before Building Permission runs out in April next year. We have a great team of experts in different fields and are hopeful to receive the funds needed for the project. We are grateful for the enthusiasm from the diocese and the funding we already have.

4 Pray for the work of the Church of England Evangelical Council (CEEC) as it seeks to contend for the gospel in the Church of England. Pray for their Council meeting today.

5 Pray for the Church Society Council as they meet in West Bromwich today, for useful discussions and wise decisions. For Andrew Towner as Chairman.

Shepherd the flock of God that is among you.
1 Peter 5:2

6 Pray for Lee Gatiss speaking at the Lichfield Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship (DEF) today.

7 Anchorsholme, All Saints (Blackburn) – Vicar, Anthony Barnshaw.

8 Audley, St James the Great (Lichfield) – Vicar, Simon Tomkins. We're struggling with an energy-sapping and financially-debilitating building project on our church hall, so we'd love prayers that this would be a season of outward-looking daily trust and united joy in Jesus' sovereign kindness in the midst of practical frustrations!

9 Pray for Associate Director Ros Clarke's work in supporting women in different forms of ministry, that they will be encouraged and equipped to serve the church.

Elijah found the experience of confronting unbelief and idolatry among the people of God led him to seek refuge in a cave as he was overcome by depression.

in 'the faith once delivered' and which is entrusted to every succeeding generation of believers. By the grace and Spirit of God, we are compelled to contend for this faith and to propagate it. In our desire to be faithful to the God who has called us to be His under-shepherds, we can do no other.

(i) Despite all that is amiss in our Communion, the world-wide Anglican Church is still our spiritual home. We are forever indebted to the best of classical Anglicanism for our theological and spiritual formation: the 39 Articles, the Book of Common Prayer (1662), the two sacraments, the rhythm of Morning & Evening Offices, and the well-loved anthology of hymns. Our understanding of the Church, our passion for her to fulfill God's purposes and reveal His glory, and our categories of thought in spiritual discourse all come from a common, sound and delightful inheritance. We have set our hearts to never disown our goodly heritage but to conserve all that is good for future generations till the return of our King.

(j) We will therefore continue to connect with the Communion Instruments as best we can without compromising our convictions about the authority and orthodox reading of Holy Scripture. The current situation warrants us to adopt suitable forms of '***visible differentiation***'. We will seek not to be schismatic. However, we will use appropriate degrees of freedom to ensure that we indeed fulfil our vows before God at our consecration as Bishops. These vows require us to care for the faithful throughout the Communion and to seek the true understanding of the Holy Scriptures so that we may 'by them teach and exhort (the flock of God) with wholesome doctrine.' In that spirit, we will support those who are oppressed and unjustly treated for holding on to the faith once delivered.

Archbishop Justin Badi, South Sudan (Chairman)
Archbishop Tito Zavala, Chile (Deputy Chairman)
Moderator Samuel Mankhin, Bangladesh (Hon. Sec)
Archbishop Stephen Than, Myanmar (Member)
Archbishop James Wong, Indian Ocean (Member)

Visible differentiation

I have highlighted the phrase '***visible differentiation***' as it is a phrase John Dunnett (CEEC Director of Strategy and Operations) and I have been using as we've gone round evangelical fellowships in almost every diocese over this last year. The possibility of differentiation was raised back in November 2020 in the longer CEEC video film 'The Beautiful Story' as a possible future option if the Church of England changed its doctrine of marriage as given in Holy Scripture and the existing liturgy of the Book of Common prayer and Common Worship.

I pray that this differentiation is not necessary but my own thought after Lambeth is that it may be unavoidable. Following the

quotation above from 1 Kings 18: 21 about 'limping between two opinions', far from taking heed to the prophetic warning uttered on Mount Carmel, it is possible that the Church of England may itself elevate the 'two opinions' (as summarised within the LLF process) into the official liturgy through some proposed compromise. This may be presented as not really changing the doctrine of the Church of England, but the experience of others in the Anglican Communion is that this change can soon lead to very serious consequences for those who continue to believe and teach 'according to Scripture'.

What might this 'differentiation' look like in the Church of England? At the moment we don't know, not because different options are not being considered, but because until it becomes clearer what the Bishops are going to propose, any discussion of 'differentiation' can look like we are just getting ready to leave the Church of England.

But as the Global South Communique makes clear, Global South has no intention of leaving the Anglican Communion and evangelicals have no intention of leaving the Church of England, but of contending for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3, a letter well worth studying this autumn if you are unfamiliar with it). This is the reason CEEC has been cautious about focusing on the detail of differentiation, while at the same time recognising that it may be necessary. It's also the reason why the kind of differentiation envisaged includes the establishing of separate Provinces for the orthodox faith (as the Global South are actively establishing), even though it may be that such a new Province would be for those who wish to revise the teaching rather

Prayer Diary: October

10 Babcary*, Holy Cross (Bath & Wells) – Vacancy.

11 Pray for the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

12 Bacup* (Manchester) – Vacancy.

13 Pray for more evangelical archdeacons and bishops. Particularly pray that complementarian evangelicals will be appointed to these senior positions.

14 Barton Seagrave, St Botolph (Peterborough) – Rector, Mark Lucas.

15 Bebington, St Andrew (Chester) – Rector, David Vestergaard. Please pray for continued rebuilding following the pandemic, for developing outreach and evangelism, and for recruitment of a children & families worker. Give thanks for a legacy which has made this possible.

Godliness with contentment is great gain.
1 Timothy 6:6

16 Pray for Lee Gatiss preaching at Bradfield Southend and Stanford Dingley (Diocese of Oxford) today.

17 Beeby, All Saints* (Leicester) – Vacancy.

18 Pray for the ministry of Church Society Trust, our patronage board meeting today, for wise appointments in all our Trust parishes.

19 Pray for clergy who face opposition and difficulty in their parish, and from the wider church, to remain faithful to Christ.

20 Beeston next Mileham* (Norwich) – Vacancy.

21 Pray for Lee Gatiss speaking today at Oak Hill College on issues facing Anglicans today.

22 Bispham, All Hallows (Blackburn) – Rector, Jonny Lee. Please pray for an increasingly outward focus, for reaching families and young adults with the gospel, for God to raise up the right person as Treasurer, and for deeper joy in Jesus above all.

May we pray for the Bishops, General Synod and ourselves that the Church of England will remain part of that one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, after the teaching of the prophets and apostles.

than for those who are upholding it.

If this seems painful and difficult, it is. If this seems like a distraction from what gets us up in the morning, it is. Elijah found the experience of confronting unbelief and idolatry among the people of God led him to seek refuge in a cave (1 Kings 19:4) as he was overcome by depression. He was not alone among the prophets, as Jeremiah makes clear about his own experience (Jeremiah 15:10). Many of us would rather not have to consider any of these things; simply living our own Christian lives and sustaining our churches is enough. I have found myself echoing Elijah and Jeremiah's sentiments myself, not least after the Lambeth Conference this year. But it does matter.

A call to pray

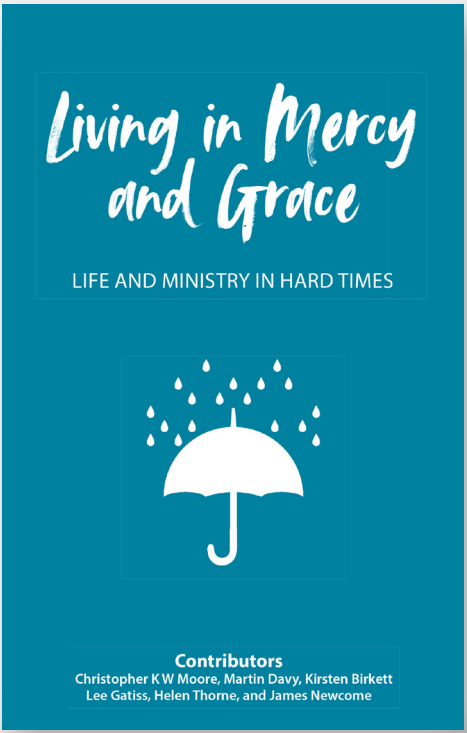
I don't know if you have seen a reprint of John Stott's writing on same-sex relationships published by the Good Book Company in 2017 edited by Sean Doherty; it is a tremendously helpful short summary of biblical teaching, pastoral testimony, and sound wisdom. In Chapter 6, 'Contemporary Arguments Considered', John Stott considers why these issues (addressed within the LLF course) are so significant. Let me finish with quoting his words which you may want to consider especially in relation to the Global South and the future integrity and consistency of the people of God.

> Why, it is asked, should we not equally acknowledge 'two integrities' in relation to same-sex partnerships, and not force people to choose? The answer should be clear. Even if women's ordination is a second order issue (which not all would accept in any case), same-sex partnerships are not. Gender in relation to marriage is a much more fundamental matter than gender in relation to ministry. Marriage has been recognised as an opposite sex union from the beginning of God's creation and institution; it is basic to human society as God intended it, and its biblical basis is incontrovertible. As Walter Pannenberg, Professor of Theology at Munich University, puts it 'The biblical assessments of homosexual practice are unambiguous in their rejection.' He therefore concludes that a church which were to recognise same-sex unions as equivalent to marriage 'would cease to be the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church'.

May we pray for the Bishops, General Synod and ourselves that the Church of England will remain part of that one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, after the teaching of the prophets and apostles and that God would have mercy on the whole Anglican Communion and worldwide Church.

Keith Sinclair is the National Director of the Church of England Evangelical Council.

www.ceec.info/gods-beautiful-story.html
www.thegfsa.org



The life to which Christ calls his followers is one of service, suffering, and hardships of all kinds. Those whom he calls into ministry can expect the struggles to be all the more intense. And yet it is through the flames that genuine faith is proved and godly character is formed.

This book will help you understand and cultivate the characteristics you need to face difficult situations with the grace and mercy of the Lord Jesus.

Reading this book made me wish that I had actually attended the conference where the papers were delivered!
Archbishop Peter Jensen

Living in Mercy and Grace is available on the Church Society website and on Amazon at £7 (paperback) and £3.99 (digital).

Prayer Diary: October–November

23 Pray for Lee Gatiss speaking at a clergy and spouses retreat for the Diocese of the Living Word (ACNA) in the USA over the next four days.

24 Blackpool, St John (Blackburn) – Vicar, Andy Dykes.

25 Pray for ministers who are approaching retirement. Pray that they may be open to new opportunities for service, and pray that their practical needs will continue to be met.

26 Bournemouth (Throop), St Paul (Winchester) – P-in-C, James Findlay.

27 Pray for Christian parents to be well-equipped to build Christian home and family life. Pray that churches will teach and model this well to the next generation.

The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord *establishes his steps.* Proverbs 16:9

28 Bovingdon, St Lawrence (St Albans) – Vicar, Charles Burch. Please pray for God's continuing guidance of our extension and reordering project as we seek to provide modern, comfortable facilities and a more flexible worship space. We pray for generous donors as we raise £800,000.

29 Pray for the Anglican Primates, that they would be faithful to the Scriptures under the pressures they face.

30 Bradfield & Stanford Dingley (Oxford) – Vacancy.

31 Pray for Chaplains in hospitals, hospices, the armed forces and other organisations

November

1 Brixton St Matthew with St Jude (Southwark) – Vicar, Stephen Sichel. Please pray for the appointment of a new building manager that they might serve to open the building to fresh movements of the Spirit. For the rebuilding of the worshipping community after the trials of the pandemic. For renewed confidence in and witness to the good news of Christ.

Pastoral accommodation and LLF

Chris Moore points to some worrying consequences if Pastoral Accommodation were to be applied to the issue of same-sex marriage.

In recent months there has been a lot of talk about Pastoral Accommodation and LLF. This is an attempt to find a path through the deep division in the Church of England over same-sex marriage (SSM), and draws on the church's handling of the issue of the remarriage of divorcees. One proposal put forward in the Hereford Diocesan Synod was that churches should be free to perform blessings of SSMs, but only if the PCC and incumbent both agree so to do.

Pastoral breakdown

Whilst this might sound reasonable, it does sow the seeds for an enduring pastoral breakdown.

Pastoral accommodation has a pleasant ring to it, but in the end it simply kicks a national division down to the parish. It is a shrug of the shoulders by General Synod, and an abdication of leadership.

What is the likelihood that all the members of a PCC and the incumbent share the same view? In multi-parish benefices – the increasingly normal pattern of ministry – the situation is all the more fraught. Is there any chance that five or six PCCs will all agree with each other and their incumbent? Such is the heat in the debate, hard-won partnerships within benefices are likely to suffer.

Issues will arise with pastoral reorganisations, when a church supportive of SSM find themselves now under the care of an incumbent who is opposed. Will such services have to cease in that church? What will be done with couples who have already booked services of blessing?

We might also envisage issues in vacancies, when a benefice split on the issue seeks a new incumbent. If a clergyperson were to apply for what is an unappealing prospect, would all PCCs be happy to appoint that applicant since his or her view would clash with at least one PCC?

Added to all of this is the increasing financial pressure churches find themselves under. We simply cannot risk the loss of income to churches as they splinter, and neither can dioceses. I'm afraid Pastoral Accommodation simply seems the worst of both worlds.

An example of Pastoral Accommodation

Of course, we do already have an example of Pastoral Accommodation. In 2014 'Five Guiding Principles' were drawn up following the passing of legislation to enable women to be ordained

to the episcopate. These principles were designed to enable the 'mutual flourishing' of those on both sides of the debate, but the experience of the past seven years has done little to give confidence that these have worked in practice. In 2020 Women and the Church (WATCH) published a guide to the principles, and one paragraph is worth quoting in full:

> This underlying assumption [that once women could be appointed as bishops, nothing more needed to be done to enable women to flourish in the Church of England] was challenged by an unpredicted result of research carried out by Dr Gabrielle Thomas published in 2019. Dr Thomas was investigating receptive ecumenism and her method was to set up several ecumenical groups of women who would discuss the same questions. One of these questions was 'What would you name as a wound in your church?' In every single group, ordained Anglican clergy described 'mutual flourishing' as 'an active wound' in the Church of England, and only three of the 22 Anglican women thought that everything was working well. (p12)

Those on the Conservative Evangelical wing of the debate have expressed disappointment that the only Complementarian bishop appointed this century is a flying bishop, whilst the Anglo-Catholic wing watched in horror as the appointment of Bishop Philip North to the see of Sheffield unravelled in a storm of controversy.

Prayer Diary: November

2 Pray for those who are considering full-time ministry in the Church of England, and for those whose job it is to discern vocations nationally and within each diocese. Pray for wisdom and faithfulness.

3 Brixton, St Paul w St Saviour (Southwark) – Vicar, Sam Whittington.

4 Pray for Luckley House School for which Church Society appoints Trustees, for wisdom and boldness for the senior team and governors to uphold a biblical Christian ethos through all aspects of school life.

5 Brunswick, Christ Church (Manchester) – Rector, Simon Gatenby.

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. Colossians 3:2

6 Pray for evangelicals to be engaged in the synods and committees of the Church of England, for the sake of the gospel. Pray especially for those serving on General Synod.

7 Burlingham (North)* (Norwich) – Rector, Kevin Billson.

8 Pray for evangelicals involved in revitalisation ministry. Pray for them to have perseverance, faithfulness, patience and grace. Pray for fellow-workers to join them, and for many hearts to be rekindled in love for the Lord.

9 Burlingham (South)* with Lingwood (Norwich) – Rector, David Wakefield. Pray that our preschool group Butterflies continues to be a joyous place for children to meet and for carers to support each other.

10 Pray for the ministry of Diocesan Evangelical Fellowships, that evangelical Anglicans might be united in the gospel and work together.

11 Burton-on-Trent, All Saints w Christ Church (Lichfield) – P-in-C, David Collier.

12 Pray for the King and the Royal Family.

13 Camborne (Truro) – P-in-C, Rosheen Browning.

Should Pastoral Accommodation be sought over the issue of SSM, intolerable pressure will be put on bishops.

It is therefore fair to say that both sides of the debate do not see the present situation as tenable, and it certainly should give pause to any who think that Pastoral Accommodation might work in the issue of SSM.

Bishops as centres of unity

Within our ecclesiology, bishops are centres of unity within their dioceses. The nature of the calling leads to a mediating role in many circumstances, and both clergy and laity seek to have confidence in their bishop.

Already in the accommodation surrounding the ordination of women we have seen this unity lessened. Simply put: some clergy in the denomination will not receive communion from other clergy (and in some instances their bishops). Yet for all this, a bishop must exercise a uniting pastoral role over his or her clergy and laity.

Should Pastoral Accommodation be sought over the issue of SSM, intolerable pressure will be put on bishops. The question will be asked: what can clergy in same-sex relationships hope for by way of respect from those who because of theological conviction do not accept their pattern of living? Similarly, what kind of recognition and respect can same-sex partnered bishops expect from those who view such a relationship as contrary to the will of God?

There really is no way to win since Pastoral Accommodation takes an issue out of the realm of theological conviction, and makes it a matter of choice. After all, if the church says that two opposing views are equally valid why should one hold steadfastly to one of them? Is that not simply bigotry? Something simply cannot be both true and untrue at the same time.

Pastoral accommodation has a pleasant ring to it, but in the end it simply kicks a national division down to the parish. It is a shrug of the shoulders by General Synod, and an abdication of leadership. The easy decision is often not the right one.

Chris Moore is rector of the Fownhope benefice in Hereford Diocese and Regional Director of Church Society in the South and West of England.

Seven years of ministry

Ordination at Sheffield Cathedral, June 2022

As he approaches retirement, Rod Thomas reflects on his ministry as Bishop of Maidstone.

In my recent regional meetings this year, I outlined three areas where I felt that complementarian evangelicals had made progress as a result of the arrangements introduced in 2014 under the House of Bishops' Declaration – including my own consecration.

Consolidation

Shortly after I was consecrated there were fewer than 30 evangelical churches that had passed resolutions under the House of Bishops' Declaration. However, my appointment prompted many more discussions within parishes and as a result that number increased to 147. There are still possibilities for further growth. The total number represents roughly 23,000 active church goers and therefore, as a group of churches, it is larger than a number of dioceses. This growth has been accompanied by a growth in confidence about the way in which the resolutions are enabling complementarians both to maintain their distinctiveness but also to be fully a part of their dioceses. This is reflected in a huge growth in the number of people being confirmed in our churches. In 2018, I confirmed 243 people – again a number in excess of some dioceses.

Quite apart from numbers on the ground, my own role has been formally welcomed in fifteen dioceses which have made me an assistant bishop as well as others who have enabled me to minister without that particular licence. I have been given a voice in the House of Bishops and a role in some of its working groups, and a number of dioceses now involve me as a matter of routine in appointments to conservative evangelical parishes; the sponsorship of ordinands; ordinations; licensings; and ministerial development reviews.

Episcopacy and the gospel

One of the questions which parishes have had to ask themselves in the last seven years is: now that they have a distinctive bishop, what should they be doing with him? This has prompted a good deal of consideration about the nature of episcopacy and the way in which the role is prefigured in the New Testament accounts of Timothy's and Titus's ministries. Whilst this has generated new theological work (and we are currently awaiting a major new publication by Martin Davie on the subject) we have been

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prompted to see how episcopacy can help with accountability within our churches – not least when I have had to be deeply involved in searching for resolutions to pastoral difficulties; can encourage us in gospel distinctiveness; can advocate on our behalf; and provide advice drawing on widespread experience.

For myself, I have to say that one of the experiences which has most surprised me is how much encouragement incumbents and wardens draw from a bishop who supports them in their gospel endeavours. The strapline on my letterheads reads 'Strengthening Gospel Ministry'. It often only takes the words 'well done' or a prayer thanking God for the way he is working in a church, for ministers to feel hugely encouraged and strengthened. This sort of encouragement is needed more than ever at the moment. The pandemic has been a struggle for us all and the struggle continues in terms of encouraging everyone to come back to physical meetings. Having the explicit support of a bishop who thinks the same way, contributes much to the perseverance local ministers now need.

Fostering unity

While it is commonplace to hear bishops describe themselves as providing a focus of unity, my own experience has been that it has not been my presence which has fostered unity so much as the nature of my ministry. I have been able to maintain good relationships with AMiE through the umbrella body of GAFCON; I have been able to reassure dioceses that resolutions do not lead to division but foster involvement in diocesan life; and at a time when evangelicals have been beset by scandals of different kinds, I have been able to make a case for working together rather than allowing these further to fracture us.

One of the ways in which I have been able to do the latter has been through the publication of the Maidstone Commitments – which invite parishes to subscribe to five particular commitments aimed at demonstrating that our churches promote safe and healthy cultures. An additional key role is to work with other evangelicals through the Church of England Evangelical Council in order to tackle the current challenges facing the Church in a unified way.

Challenges

Despite the way in which our position within the Church of England as complementarians has been consolidated, we do need to maintain current momentum. The fact that a church passed a resolution five years ago does not necessarily mean that everybody in our churches is still aware of the biblical reasons for the differences there need to be in men's and women's ministries. One of our challenges, therefore, is periodically to teach on the subject and to have our church councils review their resolutions from time to time.

There are of course even more fundamental challenges facing us in terms of what might happen within the Church of England now that the Living in Love and Faith process has concluded. I am remaining on the 'Next Steps Group' after retirement in October and will also attend all the residential meetings of the College of Bishops throughout October, November, December and January as it seeks to offer a way forward to the Church on the controversial issue of marriage and sexual relationships. Another major challenge, although one that is less well publicised, is the reorganisation of diocesan life post-pandemic

with its new financial challenges – which can mean that dioceses want complementarian parishes to link up with others who do not share their view of ministry. More positively we also need to continue to address the challenges of having the confidence to encourage new people into ordained ministry; and to contribute well to the Church of England's declared ambition of creating 10,000 new church plants (or transplants) by the year 2030.

It is easy to feel overwhelmed by the scale of some of the challenges we face – not the least of which is continuing to find ways of bringing the gospel of salvation to so many around us who are unaware – and often uncaring – of the need. However, as I look back on the last seven years, I feel that we are in a better position than we were to seek to tackle these challenges and this is so despite the convulsive scandals we have faced. I give God great thanks that he has opened the way that he has for us to do so.

Thanks

Lastly, I wouldn't want to reflect on the last seven years without thanking Church Society for its unstinting support during this time. I have been particularly grateful for Lee Gatiss's membership of my Advisory Group and for the regular way in which members have been asked to pray for me. I have known God to be answering your prayers time after time.

Rod Thomas will be retiring from his role as the Bishop of Maidstone in October 2022.

Prayer Diary: November

14 Chadderton, Christ Church & St Saviour's (Manchester) – Vicar, Ben Wilkinson. Pray for many to grow as disciples and be equipped for ministry as we study 1 Peter together in small groups. Pray for our churches as we seek to discern a vision for the coming years.

15 Pray for the ministry of Church Society Trust, our patronage board meeting today, for wise appointments in all our Trust parishes.

16 Pray for all incumbents to have appropriate administrative support, and for churches to have suitable people who can take on the increasingly complex and important tasks of safeguarding, finance and maintenance.

17 Chadwell St Mary (Chelmsford) – P-in-C, Darren Barlow. Following the departure in early 2020 of approximately two-thirds of the congregation to a newly-formed AMiE church, the key challenge for the parish is to reconnect with the local community and make Christ known. The remaining congregation is mature, prayerful and very committed to seeing the church regrow and with a parish of just over 10,000 residents we are confident of this happening.

18 Pray for the continuing witness of the 39 Articles. For the Church of England to uphold them and ensure that they are taught and valued.

19 Pray for Lee Gatiss speaking today about John Owen's Trinitarian theology at All Saints, Fordham, Diocese of Chelmsford.

20 Pray for Lee Gatiss preaching today at All Saints, Fordham, Diocese of Chelmsford.

21 Chatham, St Philip & St James (Rochester) – Vicar, Martyn Saunders.

22 Pray for AMiE and ANiE that God's kingdom may grow through their work.

23 Pray for the national consultation on evangelism sponsored by CEEC at All Souls, Langham Place, London today.

True complementarianism

Ros Clarke suggests how to reframe thinking about complementarianism more positively.

It's 30 years since the first women were ordained priests in the Church of England and seven years since the first woman was consecrated as a bishop. We are no longer actively fighting the battle on this issue and the Church of England is clear that it has come to a settled mind on this matter. That settled mind, of course, has expressly stated that those who disagree continue to be welcome and should be enabled to flourish in the CofE.

You may make your own mind up as to how well others have held to this commitment. But for now, I want to ask how well we have held to it.

Have we, as complementarians, continued to teach complementarian theology in our churches? Have we been able to explain it to others? Have we embodied it winsomely and graciously in the wider church and in our own congregations? Do those who are too young to remember the debates of the 1980s and early 1990s really know what the arguments were about? Is this a doctrine which we only espouse when we are embattled, or is it also a doctrine we celebrate in peacetime? Is complementarianism flourishing in your church?

I have been wondering why we don't sing about our complementarianism. Why don't we teach it to our children and young people? Why are we not praising God for making men and women to serve in his church, and to relate in marriage, in a way which reflects his glory and models his salvation plan?

Why are we not praising God for making men and women to serve in his church, and to relate in marriage, in a way which reflects his glory and models his salvation plan?

Are we ashamed to be complementarian?

Maybe it's not shame, so much as thinking it's not that important. At one level that's true. Of course it's not a salvation issue. You don't have to be a complementarian to be saved, any more than you have to be a paedobaptist. But if the Bible teaches us that complementarianism is God's best way for our lives – well then of course we should be teaching and persuading and equipping people in our churches to understand that, to be obedient to it, and to be glad about it.

So I have a few suggestions that may help to reframe our thinking about complementarianism in a more positive way and, perhaps I may dare to suggest, a more biblical way.

Complementarianism is not about saying no to women

Far too often, complementarianism is defined by what women aren't permitted to do: no, you

can't preach; no, you can't be ordained; no, you can't do that. Or that. Or that.

But here's the thing, complementarianism should be about saying yes to women. If we believe that men and women complement each other, then we are saying that we need women – just as much as we need men. We need the ministry of women in our churches. We need them to be ministering alongside men. We need men and women working together to reflect something of the nature of our triune God. We need men and women working together to offer pastorally sensitive and effective ministry to our whole congregations. We know that men and women are not interchangeable, and so we must recognise that we need both men and women.

True complementarianism says a wholehearted yes to women in ministry.

Complementarianism does not prevent women using their gifts

> Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are

Prayer Diary: November–December

24 Cheadle, St Mary (Chester) – Rector, Rob Munro. Thank God for the steady recovery of the churches post-Covid, especially the fruitful witness of our community café and our weekly summer open-air evening services with over 100 attending. Pray especially for our work with young people, as we search for a new senior youth pastor, to work with a new ministry trainee in re-establishing our work and outreach to families – hit badly by Covid.

25 Chilton* (St Eds & Ips) – Rector, Andrew Doarks.

26 Great Chishill* (Chelmsford) – Rector, Anand Sodadasi. Give thanks to the Lord for his mercies in helping to recover from the Covid impact, as the congregation is getting slowly back to church, although we still have some confidence issues. Please pray for the vacancy in our parish of Icknield Way Villages from this month as I am leaving the parish to take up a new post in Canterbury Diocese.

27 Pray for Lee Gatiss preaching today at St George's, Wembdon, Diocese of Bath & Wells.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. James 1:17

28 Pray for greater evangelical witness in our cathedrals and churches over the Christmas period.

29 Compton Chamberlayne* (Salisbury) – Team Rector, Graham Southgate.

30 Pray that Anglican churches would call the nation to repent and believe the gospel, and for the Holy Spirit to bring many to a saving faith in Christ.

December

1 Corley (Coventry) – Vacancy.

2 Pray for churches with close links to schools, that they may be effective in presenting the gospel clearly, particularly over the Christmas season.

3 Cowden, St Mary Magdalene (Chichester) – Vacancy.

Complementarianism is not sexism and it must not be used as an excuse for sexism. Complementarian theology does not include a view of women as less able, less articulate, less valuable, secondary, weaker, or more vulnerable to sin.

the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

1 Corinthians 12:7–11 (NIV)

To each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. There is no distinction between men and women in 1 Corinthians 12 – unlike preceding and following chapters. Women as well as men are given gifts by the Spirit. All kinds of gifts: wisdom and knowledge, faith and healing.

These gifts are given, not for the benefit of the recipient, but for the common good. The whole church is blessed when one person has a gift of teaching, or administration, or hospitality, or whatever it is.

The women in your church have all kinds of gifts, and the whole church will benefit when they are equipped, encouraged and enabled to use them. Men, you need the gifted women in your church just as much as the women need you. And it seems to me that it is part of your role as pastor, to be helping everyone in the church identify their gifts, learn how to use them, and be given opportunities to use them.

True complementarianism celebrates all the gifts women bring and works to find ways for them to be used.

Complementarianism is not sexism.
Sexism is prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination, typically against women, on the basis of sex.

Complementarianism is not sexism and it must not be used as an excuse for sexism. Complementarian theology does not include a view of women as less able, less articulate, less valuable, secondary, weaker, or more vulnerable to sin. It does not include a view of men as more able, more articulate, more valuable, primary, stronger or less vulnerable to sin.

Men and women are equally and together made in the image of God. Men and women were equally and together given the same creation ordinances, to be fruitful and multiply, to rule and subdue. When Paul describes our salvation status in Galatians 3:28, he tells us that in Christ there *is* no male and female – not that all distinction is erased, but that we are all saved in the same way, with the same status.

If you view women as lesser than men, you do not have the same view of them as Christ, and your complementarian practice is based on sexism, not theology.

The Bible is not prejudiced against women. There are women in the Bible whose faith, courage, leadership, intelligence, strength and wisdom rival that of any men. There are women in your churches whose faith, courage, leadership, intelligence, strength and wisdom rival, or even outstrip, your own.

The Bible does not stereotype women. There are women who are wives and mothers, of course. But there are also women who will hammer a tent peg through their enemy's head. And women who will murder their own grandchildren. There are women who use sex

to tempt and manipulate. But there are also women – many women – who are victims of sexual violence. There are women who risk everything, women who transgress social boundaries, women who speak, women who bear witness, women whom God uses in all kinds of ways. The Bible does not assume that all women will run the Sunday school and serve tea after the service.

Does the Bible discriminate against women?
That is a harder question to answer, because of course there are certain roles not open to women. In the Old Testament, women could not be priests. They could be prophets, one was a judge, and a couple tried to take on the role of the king – even if not the title. That did not go well. In the New Testament, women followers of Christ were not included in the twelve, nor were they appointed as elders, deacons or bishops.

That does seem like discrimination, and certainly some people will always see it that way.

It seems to me that if we recognise all of those as roles of service, and if we ensure that there are always roles of service of equal worth available to women, that mitigates against the experience of discrimination substantially.

It seems to me that if we ensure that women are equally able to access training for ministry and employment in our churches on the same terms and conditions as their male colleagues, that goes a long way to minimise the experience of discrimination.

Prayer Diary: December

4 Pray for those who don't usually go to church but will attend carol services during the Christmas season, that they will hear the gospel and respond.

5 Cudham, St Peter & St Paul (Rochester) – Vicar, John Musson.

6 Pray for wise administration and use of the funds and properties entrusted to Church Society for gospel work.

7 Dagenham, St Peter & St Paul (Chelmsford) – Vicar, Joel Edwards. Thank God that he has made us such a varied church family; pray for his help to express the unity we have as Christ's people in growing love for each other and in serving his purpose together. Give thanks for encouragements for our monthly door-to-door visiting throughout this year. Pray for it to be fruitful in lives added to God's people.

Be kind to one another … forgiving one another. Ephesians 4:32

8 Pray for *The Global Anglican* editorial Board meeting today – for excellent resources to be produced. Peter Jensen as Editor, and Lee Gatiss as Chairman.

9 Danehill, All Saints (Chichester) – Vicar, Paddy MacBain. Pray for continued unity, godliness, wisdom and provision. Pray that we will joyfully share the message of Christ and grow in faith.

10 Pray that the Bishops and clergy in the Church of England would uphold biblical teaching on human sexuality.

11 Dolton* (Exeter) – P-in-C, Susan Oldham. Please ask God's blessing upon a new toddler group which is to begin in one of the churches in September. We pray that this will be a blessing to the community and will draw those on the fringes of the church. To listen to God's voice and discern the way forward.

12 Great Dunham* (Norwich) – Vacancy.

True complementarianism values women as individuals, whose ministry should be enabled and valued by the church as much as any man's.

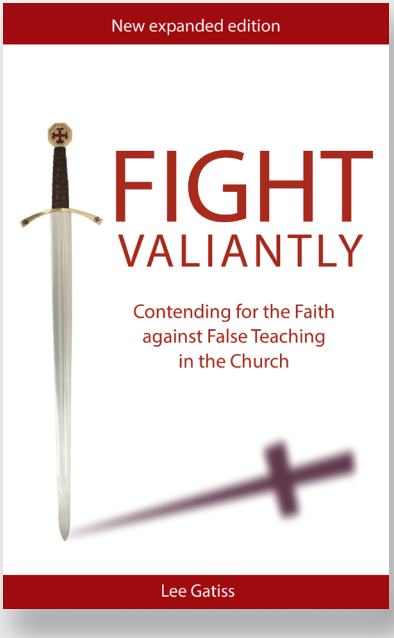
It seems to me that if the ministry of women, paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time, is honoured and valued by our churches, and especially by the church leader, the experience of discrimination will be much less.

We must not be prejudiced against women, we must not fall into the trap of stereotyping women, and we must do everything we can to minimise discrimination against women.

True complementarianism values women as individuals, whose ministry should be enabled and valued by the church as much as any man's.

So please – don't be ashamed to teach your churches what the Bible says about women and men. Do show them that it says a wholehearted yes to women in ministry. Do celebrate all the gifts women bring to your church and work to find ways for them to be used. And do value women as individuals, whose ministry should be enabled and valued by the church as much as any man's.

Ros Clarke is Associate Director of Church Society



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Now, more than ever, every faithful Christian in the Church of England needs to be contending for the faith against false teaching.

This book will equip our churches to contend for the gospel both with greater biblical courage and with godly integrity.

William Taylor, Rector of St Helen's Bishopsgate, London.

Fight Valiantly is available on the Church Society website and on Amazon at £10 (paperback) and £5.99 (digital).

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Lee Gatiss
Clare Hendry
James Hughes
Rob Munro

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Prayer Diary: December

13 Pray for Regional Directors, George Crowder, Tony Cannon, Chris Moore, and Theological Consultant, Kirsten Birkett to be effective in supporting gospel ministry across the country, and to work well with local and regional networks.

14 Duffield, St Alkmund (Derby) – Vicar, James Hughes. Give thanks for post-Covid outreach opportunities: Sanctuary Café, Holiday Club, and opportunities in primary schools. Pray for more opportunities, and for James our new youth and children's worker as he begins his role, with a focus on outreach to children and parents.

15 Pray for the work of Affinity in connecting evangelicals across denominations in the UK. For Anglican evangelicals to have good relationships with non-Anglicans. For Lee Gatiss on their Advisory Council.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Romans *8:35*

16 Pray for our publishing ministry to be clear and faithful in equipping the church: *The Global Anglican*, *Crossway*, books, podcast, and online.

17 Pray for clergy (both unemployed and employed) looking for posts.

18 Pray for members of all Synods and Committees, that godly wisdom would be brought to bear at every level of the Church of England.

19 Düsseldorf, Christ Church (Germany) – Chaplain, Stephen Walton. Pray that we would be faithful in building the Lord's House, and that he would revive our spirits (Haggai 1). Pray for more Christian families, who will stay here long-term and be a backbone for the church. Pray for the restart of the youth and children's work after the pandemic – we need more leaders.

20 Pray for the ministry of Church Society Trust, our patronage board meeting today, for wise appointments in all our Trust parishes.

21 Pray for the Latimer Trust and its publications ministry.

Complementarianism in practice

Kirsten Birkett makes some observations about the practice of complementarian women's ministry in the Church of England today, mostly based on her research for the Bishop of Maidstone early last year.

The good news is that the majority of women who responded to the survey felt very satisfied and very well supported with their ministry job, and no one replied in the 'not at all satisfied' category. It's good to point that out, because it's contrary to the narrative that a complementarian position reduces women's opportunities to thrive in ministry. On the ground, that's not what we see. Several themes emerged:

Complementarian churches give complementarian women freedom in their ministry

Women responded with comments such as:

- *I'm not expected to do things I'm not comfortable with.*
- *I am wonderfully free to minister to women and children without being pressurised.*
- *It frees me up to disciple and train women.*

This is something we need to continue to point out within the Church of England. There are many women who, of their own independent intellectual and conscience conviction, hold to the view that Scripture makes very clear a consistent complementarian position concerning men's and women's ministry. These are women who deserve for their views to be heard and respected in the Church of England. Complementarian churches allow them to get on with the job of doing ministry. It would be appalling for them to be forced into a context that they consider unscriptural and disobedient to God. Mutual flourishing means that these women deserve recognised ministries that express their biblical principles. It is very encouraging to see that complementarian churches are enabling women in ministry to do the ministry they wish to do.

It is heartening to see that there are many ways in which complementarian churches are encouraging women's ministry and helping it to flourish.

Complementarian churches give helpful parameters to ministry

- *It gives me guiding principles for the extent of my role.*
- *My role is clearly defined and I'm not having to work through what I should or should not do.*

On the ground, this is invaluable. There is plenty of ministry to do, and women who are clear on their convictions do not want to have to keep fighting the same battles over and over as to what are the parameters of that ministry. They want to get on with doing the job.

It means that women are valued

It was encouraging to see many comments along these lines. Some answers were:

- *Women are valued as equal.*
- *I think it ensures my role is seen as important and valued.*
- *I am definitely seen in the staff team as a valid member of staff. I am included in decisions, and my opinion is listened to.*
- *It increases the amount of ministry to women:*
- *I think teaching to women has increased in quantity and quality.*
- *It … means our church leadership is convinced women's ministry is worth investing in because they are convinced the church as a whole will benefit from this.*

It is heartening to see that there are many ways in which complementarian churches are encouraging women's ministry and helping it to flourish.

However, the news is not all good. Women were asked, how is [the complementarian stance of your church] not helpful?

While some answered that there was no way in which the complementarian stance was unhelpful, there were several themes that arose concerning ways in which ministry is not flourishing.

There are not enough jobs for women in ministry

One of the reasons I have frequently heard for why the Church of England does not want to ordain distinctive deacons is that there are not enough jobs for them. It is a sad reflection on complementarian churches if that continues to be the case. One woman commented:

- *[S]ometimes women's ministry is devalued – for example, despite there being many more women than men within the congregation, the men's worker is full-time and I am part-time. We have a large staff team with a disproportionately high number of men on the team (not all of whom preach), given the make-up of the congregation. When lockdown happened I was furloughed, while the men's worker wasn't.*

  Or this one:
- *It's not helpful when my minister makes comments such as 'I took a hit hiring a female youth worker, because I could get a man to do some of the preaching.'*

One wonders if that man would say, 'I took a hit hiring a male youth worker, because I could get a woman to be looking after some of the young women.' The question is, do we really value women's ministry or not? We claim that men's and women's ministries are not interchangeable – well, that means that men cannot do women's ministry; it is necessary for women to do it. Women in the Bible are commanded to teach other women. It is not an optional extra, and it cannot be assumed – especially these days – that it will or can be done by volunteers. If a congregation needs a biblically-trained, employed man then it also needs a biblically-trained, employed woman.

Another comment was:

- *[W]e still feel more permitted than pursued… Often we're left to our own devices etc – the answer to any request is more often than not 'yes' but the initiative doesn't usually come from the guys.*

We need to be demonstrating – men need to demonstrate – that women's ministry is not the same as a man's, and therefore needs to exist in its own right. This leads us to the next point:

Women lack the job security in ministry that men have

There is not the same recognised pathway for ministry for women as for men. This impacts training, and has a knock-on effect for how the job is valued and protected. Some of the comments:

- *[T]here's more of an obvious pathway/ expectation for men my age – you go to Oak Hill, curacy and then become a vicar who leads a team. That isn't as clear for women.*
- *The emphasis on recruiting and training men for pastor-teacher roles means historically we haven't thoroughly thought through how best to train female ministry interns.*

Or conversely:

- *As a woman, and because I don't have an official status or a theology degree, it feels like my input isn't valued, and so I feel like a lesser member of the staff team.*

If as complementarians we do not want women to be duplicating men's ministry – which we don't – then we need to get to work and create a different, and equally secure, pathway. The wider church won't do it. We are the ones who need to demonstrate that we value women's ministry in its own integrity. Which brings me to the third point:

Women in ministry don't get paid enough

This became very clear from some of the statistics on pay that were gathered. As one woman said,

- *Complementarianism can be used to justify blatant sexism. I am paid roughly the same as my male equivalents, but they are given housing and have their bills paid.*

The question returns – do we value women's ministry, or don't we? As complementarians we claim to, but money speaks.

We need to explain complementarianism better

Finally, a theme that has occurred in many discussions I have been part of over the past year. Complementarianism is woefully misunderstood in the wider church. While we may decry the prejudice that means others fail to listen seriously to a complementarian position, equally we could do better in making sure our biblical position is explained clearly and coherently.

This is hard to do, and we all get tired of having to justify our position. However, part of our sacrificial ministry to the wider church is to explain, and demonstrate, the goodness of the biblical picture.

'Equal but different' is all too often in practice, 'unequal', as seen above in some of the comments: unequal in pay, in inclusion in church strategy, and in the way women were encouraged for their future. This cannot continue.

We have a wonderful vision of how men and women can relate and work together, something that the world is increasingly reaching for. It is great to see that in many cases this is being worked out in our churches. Let us continue to improve.

Kirsten Birkett is Theological Consultant to Church Society

Church Society

EQUIPPING GOD'S PEOPLE TO LIVE GOD'S WORD

SUPPORTER CHURCH

Becoming a **Church Society Supporter Church** is a way for your whole congregation to publicly demonstrate their commitment to seeing the Church of England reformed and renewed in biblical faith.

In the current climate in the Church of England, it is increasingly important for churches to be able to clearly identify themselves as faithful to the Bible, faithful to historical Anglicanism, and faithful on the most pressing issues of the day, including matters of gender and sexuality.

We are delighted to welcome two new Church Society Supporter Churches: **St Nicholas Church Stevenage** (pictured) and **St Luke's Wolverhampton**.

Supporter Churches commit to praying, contending and contributing financially to the work of Church Society. They also receive a welcome package and discounted rates for our publications and conferences.

To find out more about Supporter Churches please see the Church Society website or contact the office.

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Prayer Diary: December

22 Eastbourne, All Souls (Chichester) – Vicar, Mark Redhouse. Please pray as we seek to appoint an associate Vicar to the parish for the first time. Thank God for the finances in place and please pray for the right appointment. Please pray for wisdom and opportunity as we have an increasing number of social projects using our buildings and church family serving with them. These include the food bank and a refugee drop-in centre. Pray that we serve others with an evangelistic edge.

23 Pray that evangelical Anglican theological colleges would not be discriminated against when candidates are advised on training.

24 Pray for gospel clarity at midnight services, and for open hearts to respond.

25 Christmas Day. For clear gospel presentation at Christmas Day services, for Christians to appreciate afresh God's salvation.

26 Pray for churches in the Anglican Communion facing persecution in countries openly hostile to Christianity.

27 Eastbourne, Holy Trinity (Chichester) – Vicar, Philip Coekin. HT Advocacy offering help to people in crisis: for the recruitment of new advocates from within the church. For new informal outreach meeting on Sunday evenings called, 'The 7o'clock'. Ministry: for recently retired clergy to join Holy Trinity to assist with preaching and ministry to seniors.

28 Pray for Parliament and Government, especially for the witness of Christians.

29 Egham, St John the Baptist (Guildford) – Vicar, Esther Prior. 'They ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.' Pray that this would be said of us.

30 Pray for aged and infirm Christians with limited opportunities for Christian fellowship, and those who care for them.

31 Low Elswick (Newcastle) – Vicar, George Curry.

Thank you for praying with us.

* Indicates that the Trust's parish is part of a larger benefice.

Crossway

Autumn 2022/165
Editor: Ros Clarke

Crossway is the quarterly magazine of Church Society and is available free to members of the Society. For details of how to become a member, please check our website or contact us using the details listed below.

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Overseas: £17

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THE Global Anglican

Established in 1879 as *The Churchman*

The Global Anglican

The Autumn 2022 issue of *The Global Anglican*, an international theological journal produced quarterly by Church Society, is now out:

- Editorial – 'Reconciliation without Repentence': *Peter Jensen*
- 'Mapping the Territory: what is the "Theological Interpretation of Scripture"?': *Timothy Ward*
- 'Reading Theologically': *Christopher Stead*
- 'Scripture Interprets Scripture: Reading Scripture Canonically': *Christopher B. Ansberry*
- '"Hold to a Sure Path": John Calvin on Theology and Reading Scripture': *Alden C. McCray*

Making a bequest to Church Society

Here is a convenient form of words which can be used to make a bequest to Church Society in your Will:
'I GIVE the residue of my estate / the sum of _____ pounds (£) to CHURCH SOCIETY of Ground Floor, Centre Block, Hille Business Park, 132 St Albans Road, Watford WD24 4AE and I DIRECT that the receipt of the Administrator or other proper officer of Church Society shall be good and sufficient discharge to my Executor.'

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