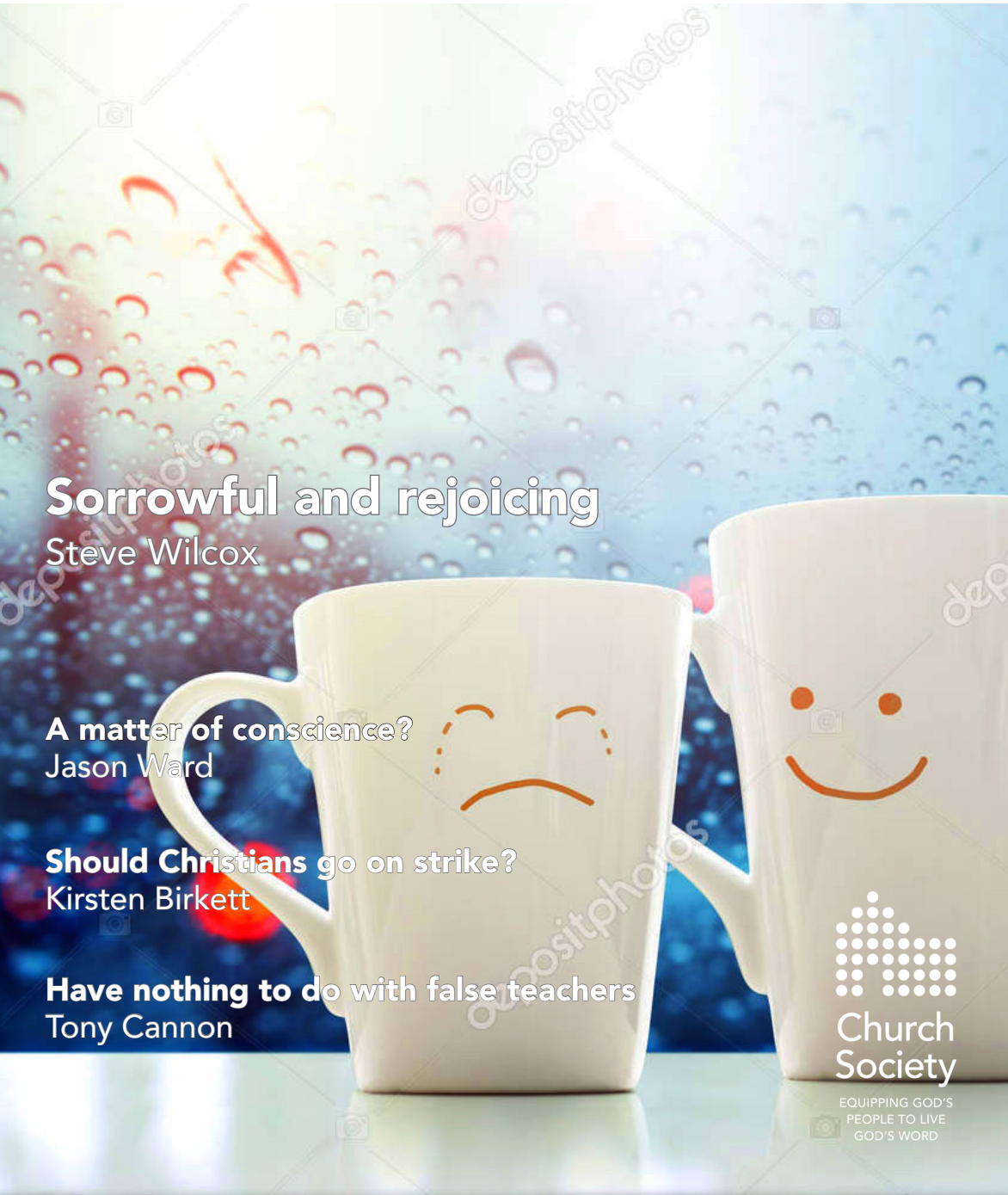
SPRING 2023/167

Crossway

THE MAGAZINE OF CHURCH SOCIETY



Sorrowful and rejoicing
Steve Wilcox

A matter of conscience?
Jason Ward

Should Christians go on strike?
Kirsten Birkett

Have nothing to do with false teachers
Tony Cannon

Church Society
EQUIPPING GOD'S PEOPLE TO LIVE GOD'S WORD

Sorrowful and rejoicing

Steve Wilcox explains why he is 'sorrowful and rejoicing' after General Synod.

I recently attended a conference with the theme 'Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing'. The title is of course based on the words of the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:10. It was well-timed, because those words sum up my response to the crucial vote at General Synod in February.

I am, of course, sorrowful. I am sorrowful that General Synod (and the Church more generally) has reached the point where it has approved a motion which to many people (including myself) will effectively permit same-sex blessings in a Church of England church. That's the way the media are reporting it; that's the way the average person in England will understand it; that's the way many people in the Church of England will interpret it. I am grieving over that state of affairs, as many of us are.

Those who argued for holding to the historical, biblical, orthodox position were speaking from the breadth of evangelicalism, as well as from the traditional Anglo Catholic tradition.

Process matters more than outcome

But let me tell you why I am also rejoicing. I am rejoicing because, as I was reminded while rewatching an episode of *The West Wing* recently, the process matters more than the outcome. Don't believe the media (or social media) headlines.

I must begin by commending two excellent chairs – the humble and apparently impartial Geoffrey Tattersall (who kept the mood light-hearted with jokes about comfort breaks and chocolate); and our good and sovereign God. If you get the chance to watch the whole eight-hour debate and are able to curb your emotional response then you will discover that it really was a glorious piece of theatre – a symphony of ebb and flow, of cut and thrust.

But of course, we cannot be impartial or curb our emotional response. The many people who spoke from an orthodox, biblical perspective spoke brilliantly. And there is no doubt in my mind that the argument was won convincingly for those putting forward the orthodox biblical position. The argument was of course also well put by Archbishop Fawzy Shehata, the representative of the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches. It was also clear that those who argued for holding to the historical, biblical, orthodox position were speaking from the breadth of evangelicalism, as well as from the traditional Anglo Catholic tradition. They included bishops, female clergy, complementarians, HTB members, people from ethnic minorities, some of the youngest members of Synod, as well as more senior members.

A better way

It became more and more clear as the debate moved on that the two views are sincerely held in conscience, irreconcilable, and of primary importance to both sides. As I put it in my speech (effectively addressing the Bishops on behalf of the Clergy and Laity): 'We don't feel that the depth of our disagreement has been understood – or the consequences which must result from that disagreement, that we are in danger of going beyond the bounds of unity.'

Indeed, as the debate moved on it became more and more clear to me that some kind of settlement was the only viable solution. This was referenced early on by Vaughan Roberts and the Bishop of Oxford; later on Wednesday by Andrew Selous – the Second Estates commissioner – and myself; then on Thursday morning by Ed Shaw, the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Guildford. In personal conversations I found many of those on the other side of the debate who agreed with me that we need to find another way – a better way. Of course, the question remains what kind of settlement the Bishops have in mind – or can be persuaded to accept.

Use and misuse of power

This brings me to the use and misuse of power. As a new member of General Synod I am still getting used to its workings. There is much to be commended, but I'm sorry to say that there are also weaknesses, and many of those weaknesses were glaringly exposed for all to see (and, one hopes, will remain in the public

Prayer Diary: April

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

1 Pray for the ongoing situation in Ukraine, for the displaced and the suffering, for a peaceful and just outcome, and for believers to be sustained and a light to the nation.

2 Pray for Lee Gatiss preaching today at Holy Trinity, Wandsworth.

3 Reepham* (Norwich) – Team Rector, Keith Rengert.

4 Pray for evangelistic opportunities over the Easter period. For the crucified and risen Christ to be proclaimed clearly in the churches of our land.

5 Ringsfield* (St Eds & Ips) – P-in-C, Philip Miller.

…the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.
Mark 1:15

6 Rodden (Bath & Wells) – Vacancy.

7 Good Friday. Pray that Christians everywhere will have a deeper love for the Saviour who died for us.

8 High Roding (Chelmsford) – P-in-C, Robert Stone.

9 Easter Sunday. Praise God that the Lord Jesus Christ has defeated sin and death to give us new life and hope.

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

11 Routh (York) – P-in-C, Jonathan Baker.

12 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. Particularly pray for their work in encouraging churches and ministers to hold fast to biblical teaching on sexuality in the ongoing LLF discussions, and especially for Keith Sinclair, the National Director, and John Dunnett, Director of Strategy and Operations.

I am sorrowful. I am deeply grieved that we have reached this point. But I am also rejoicing. God is at work. He loves his church. He will not be mocked.

record.) It seems to me the greatest weakness is the inappropriate use of power. It's ironic, because one of the Pastoral Principles we have been encouraged to observe throughout the LLF process is 'Pay Attention to Power'. Amen to that – and we particularly needed to pay attention to power during this Synod.

I observed in my speech that 'We are grateful for all that the bishops have done – and we don't underestimate the toll it has taken on them. And yet the level of stage management that has been required over the last few days shows the solution offered is not a real solution.' I particularly experienced this in the group work on Tuesday afternoon, where the questions asked were so limited in scope that our group had to work really hard to disagree about anything. But we did agree on a few things – including that inappropriate use of power was a big issue.

The main debate

And then to the main debate itself. A number of amendments were tabled to the motion, many of which would have enabled the bishops to clarify that they were indeed following the historic, biblical and apostolic path; or at the very least to give Synod more of a say in the process. Speech after speech showed them why it would be wise to do so. The House of Bishops as a body (led by the Bishop of London) blocked all of those amendments. Several times the Bishop of London (who was commending the motion) opposed the amendments on a mere technicality, agreeing with the spirit of the amendment but refusing to endorse it.

In my view, because the bishops opposed each amendment, the 'undecided' voters (mainly laity) often backed the bishops. Only one amendment escaped this treatment: one which restated what the bishops had already said in their flawed paper. Even then the Bishop of London didn't welcome the amendment but simply 'sought the mind of Synod' instead of blocking it. Of course, a number of courageous bishops refused to be cowed by this collegial approach, voting in favour of amendments at different times, according to the nature of the amendment. They are to be thanked and commended.

One further example: in God's providence, because the debate took longer than expected, the House of Bishops were granted a period of reflection of more than 14 hours overnight, in which they could easily have withdrawn the motion, having already been given ample evidence of the folly of the course they were taking, of the level of work that was still needed, and of the depth and breadth of division in General Synod. As a whole body they chose not to.

In summary, they were offered a number of opportunities to turn back to the Church's historic, biblical and apostolic path; or to propose 'a better way' instead; but they didn't take them. As a body they rejected them all.

The House of Bishops were not the only body to use their power inappropriately. I'm afraid I've also learned that much of General Synod works through subtle exertion of different kinds of power. Then there's the lack of transparency. Again the collegial approach of the House of Bishops in usually voting as

a block is the obvious example; but there are many others.

For myself, I am resolved to pursue weakness, and transparency, and finding common ground as much as I can as I move forwards. I pray that God enables me to do so, and others to do the same.

God is at work

In conclusion, I am sorrowful. I am deeply grieved that we have reached this point. But I am also rejoicing. God is at work. He loves his church. He will not be mocked. And perhaps this Synod was one step in the process of him being visibly glorified, and his church being refined.

At 7pm on Wednesday evening, many people left the chamber as evening worship started. I was going to leave as well to head off to a pre-arranged dinner. But the worship band began to play 'O praise the name' and I thought I'd hang around. I looked around, and the vast majority of the people in the room were those whom we might say were connected to the CEEC constituency. What followed were 15 minutes of glorious, joyful, free worship together. I wonder if it might have been a taste of what's to come?

Steve Wilcox is vicar of St Mark's and St Peter's, Anlaby and a member of General Synod.

Prayer Diary: April

13 Ryde, St James (Portsmouth) – Chaplain, James Leggett. Give thanks that there is an enquirers' group starting up this month. We have just announced that James Pontin will be setting up a church in East Cowes this year. We are very excited about this, but recognise that there are many things to work through. Please pray for James and Becky and the church family as we work out how this will look. There is a huge gospel need in this area.

14 Pray for Rob Munro to be faithful and godly in all his responsibilities as Bishop of Ebbsfleet. Pray for complementarian ministers and churches to be well-supported by his work.

15 Sevington (Canterbury) – Vacancy.

16 Pray for safe travel to Kigali in Rwanda for delegates going to Gafcon, including Lee Gatiss, today and tomorrow.

17 Slaidburn* (Leeds) – Vacancy.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away.
Daniel 7:14

18 Pray for fruitful discussions and partnership in the gospel at Gafcon this week.

19 Southfields, St Michael (Southwark) – Vicar, Stephen Melluish.

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

21 St Illogan (Truro) – Rector, Steven Robinson. After 10 years here, we are moving on to pastures new. We're taking some time out to discern what God may be calling us to next. We'd value others' prayers for this. We're praying too regarding the next appointment to St Illogan Parish, so prayers for that also please.

22 St Pinnock (Truro) – P-in-C, Ben Morgan-Lundie.

A matter of conscience?

Jason Ward examines the role of conscience in the context of the February General Synod debate.

Monty Python's Flying Circus had something of a resurgence when I was a student in the 1990s and, among young Christians at my university, admiration of *The Life of Brian* was seen as a marker of being a tolerant and gracious Christian. Only fundamentalists didn't snigger at 'He's not the Messiah: he's a very naughty boy.' So, I tried to watch and enjoy it along with other Christians whose conscience was clear, all the while my own conscience sitting uneasily with it. Which of us was right? Could we both be right at the same time; was it just a 'matter of conscience'?

At the February General Synod, several contradictory speeches appealed to 'conscience': one wanted to have a blessing with their same-sex partner according to their conscience, while another, obeying their conscience, said they'd have to break fellowship with the one who did this. Some will use these prayers because their 'conscience is clear'; some will not because their conscience will not allow it. Many people are now saying they will have to leave the church of England because their conscience will not allow them to stay.

All of which rather demands an answer to the question: 'What is conscience, and given that everyone's conscience says radically different things, is it a reliable guide for anything?'

What is conscience, and given that everyone's conscience says radically different things, is it a reliable guide for anything?

What is conscience, and can it be trusted?

What is conscience? In the Bible, it is seen as a self-awareness and an inner understanding of right and wrong, given to us by God (Romans 2:12–16), an inheritance from pre-fall days. It is also, however, distorted by the effects of sin to some extent or another, such that it may be even described as 'seared' (1 Timothy 4:2). It is this same innate, but distorted, inner understanding of right and wrong, and the wrongs that we have done, that is at first pricked by the Holy Spirit, and then washed clean by the Spirit, when a Christian is awakened to the gospel and then saved through it (Hebrews 9:14).

Is the conscience a reliable guide? It would seem not – at least not all the time. In the absence of God's law, the conscience is a restraint upon a natural tendency to evil. Yet, even the conscience is defective because it is damaged by the effects of sin. If human consciences were fully reliable, there would be a lot less sin! And none of us would feel justified in our sinful actions. With the help of God's law and through his Spirit, however, consciences can be trained and refined. A person whose

conscience permits them to do evil is rewired by knowledge of God's commands and the power of God's grace in the gospel.

Not all consciences are the same: a person's conscience may be regenerate or not, it may be seared or not, it may be correct or not. It may be under-sensitive and report false negatives, just sensitive enough, or over-sensitive and delivering false positives. In assessing the usefulness of the conscience in any debate, from watching *The Life of Brian* to engaging in same-sex relationships, we must ask if the conscience is a) an unregenerate, seared and mistaken conscience; b) a regenerate, but mistaken conscience; c) a regenerate, trained and well-calibrated conscience; or finally d) an overly-sensitive conscience.

In the context of the General Synod debate, it may be that the person asking for blessings on same-sex relationships has a conscience that was unregenerate and seared, or regenerate and mistaken, or regenerate and well-calibrated. The one who refuses to perform such blessings may be right, or may have an overly-sensitive conscience, making them feel guilt or anxiety when none was required. We cannot tell, based on just these two consciences. Remarking on the fact their aircraft has two gauges for height, Douglas in the Radio 4 comedy *Cabin Pressure* misquotes Confucius: 'Man with one altimeter, always know height; man with two, never certain.' The same may be said of consciences in General Synod: 'Synod with one conscience always knows right; synod with two, never certain.'

Prayer Diary: April–May

23 Pray for PCCs, churchwardens and clergy as they consider how best to respond to the bishops' proposed Prayers of Love and Faith. Pray for them to have wisdom and courage.

24 Pray for Church Society publications, in particular, the quarterly publications, *Crossway* and *The Global Anglican*. That our books, articles, and online resources would be edifying and useful to the church.

25 Stanstead* (St Eds & Ips) – Vacancy.

26 Pray for the ministry of Diocesan Evangelical Fellowships, that evangelical Anglicans might be united in the gospel and work together in contending for the truth of God's word.

27 Stapenhill, Immanuel (Derby) – Vacancy.

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy.
Psalm 16:11

28 Pray for the Bible by the Beach convention in Eastbourne this weekend, especially for Lee Gatiss speaking on Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell.

29 Stapenhill, St Peter (Derby).

30 Pray for wisdom for all 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.

May

1 Stirchley* (Lichfield) – Team Rector, Joanna Farnworth.

2 Pray for Ros Clarke speaking today to the Co-Mission network leaders on the Song of Songs.

3 Pray for Ros Clarke speaking today to the Bishop Jewel society about the Coronation and Establishment.

4 Stoke Ash with Thwaite* (St Eds & Ips) – P-in-C, Julia Lall.

5 Stretton-en-le-Field (Leicester) – Vacancy.

We must train or adjust our conscience according to God's absolute standard in Scripture. Where consciences disagree, we compare them both against the sure guide of Scripture.

How to trust our consciences again.
If the conscience is an instrument for weighing right and wrong in any situation we need to ensure that it is rightly calibrated. We must train or adjust our conscience according to God's absolute standard in Scripture. Where consciences disagree, we compare them both against the sure guide of Scripture.

This is why it is lamentable that the prayers were put forward for discussion before the pastoral guidance and the theological rationale were available. In order to dismiss the plain reading of Scripture in favour of conscience would require astonishingly good theological argument. No theological argument at all was given.

At this point, the age-old argument of eating meat which has been sacrificed to idols in 1 Corinthians 8–10 may be rolled out: that one conscience eats it, while another cannot; that my friends may watch *The Life of Brian*, but I may not. But, if it is a matter of conscience, in this sense, we really mean it is a matter of preference. The eating of meat or the watching of a film is an indifferent thing, neither good nor bad. But no-one is saying same-sex blessings are indifferent. This cannot be a matter of preference.

Second, Paul's conclusion on the issue of eating meat was not that you should eat meat while feeling sorry for those who can't. His argument was that if the meat caused my tender-hearted brother to stumble, I *don't* eat the meat. If those in favour of same-sex blessings applied this logic consistently, they would refrain from doing so, for the sake of others.

Third, same-sex marriage is not idol-meat. Eventually, we may assume, the vegetarian Christian in Corinth, as their conscience is trained by Scripture, will realise that the meat is God's, and that it is in fact clean and free to eat. At which point, those who have refrained from doing so for their sake, will also enjoy their roast chicken again. Because, Paul is clear, the meat is clean. But we cannot assume the same progression towards freedom for all with respect to same-sex marriage, however. The Bible is clear that such sex is unclean, forbidden and sinful.

In short, no Christian is free to engage in same-sex activity because it is not an indifferent thing, because if it makes others stumble, they are not allowed to, and because it has been declared sinful, not clean. God does not need a conscience to guide him; God determines whether a thing is clean or unclean, whether it is blessed or cursed. Our consciences may need regenerating and recalibrating and during that process we may find ourselves disagreeing. But that does not change the reality. Sin is not a matter of conscience, an indifferent thing. And neither are same-sex blessings.

Jason Ward is vicar of St Mary's Church, Chaddesden and a member of Church Society Council.

Junior Anglican Evangelical Conference 2023

The Church *for* England

2023 has already been a turbulent year for the Church of England. At this summer's Junior Anglican Evangelical Conference we will pause to take stock of what the Church of England should be and what she now is.

JAEC is open to anyone considering or in the early stages of ministry, whether lay or ordained.

Details and the booking form are on the Church Society website.

29–31 August 2023

King's Park Centre, Northampton

Prayer Diary: May

6 Pray for the Coronation of King Charles today. For gospel clarity during the Coronation Service at Westminster Abbey, and for the King to be faithful to the Coronation Oath to uphold the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law.

7 Pray for the King and the Royal Family.

8 Streatham Park (Southwark) – Vicar, Marc Richeux. Please pray for Marc convalescing following illness. Pray for St Alban's church that during this period lay folk will want to get more involved and see the work of the church progress in Marc's absence.

9 Pray for the Network of Revitalisation Ministries (NoRM) run by our Regional Directors. Pray it will encourage ministers in revitalisation work 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.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
Colossians 1:15

10 Pray for the Bishop of Ebbsfleet's regional conference in London today, with input from Church Society. Pray also for Ros Clarke speaking today to the Chester Association.

11 Pray for the ReNew women's ministry webinar today.

12 Summerstown, St Mary (Southwark) – Vicar, James Fletcher. We are encouraged locally and discouraged nationally. We praise God for the growth in numbers and maturity, especially among the children and young adults in our congregation. We are very distressed by the decision of General Synod on a national level and are asking the Lord for wisdom to know how to respond.

13 Pray for Lee Gatiss's writing ministry, that his books and articles would be edifying and useful to the church.

Should Christians go on strike?

Kirsten Birkett looks at the issue of Christians taking part in civil disobedience.

Should Christians ever campaign for improved pay and conditions, or wider issues of justice? Should a Christian nurse or train driver go on strike? Should Christians concerned for the environment join Extinction Rebellion?

Christians and civil disobedience

Christians in Britain have a history of social action. They have worked hard over the years to improve working conditions for the poor, to change laws concerning conditions, hours and pay, and to bring about fair practices. This has happened at all levels in society. For instance, Anthony Ashley Cooper, 7th Earl of Shaftesbury, was an evangelical who campaigned for better working conditions and the limitation of child labour, using his social position and wealth to help the poor. At the other end of the social scale George Loveless, an agricultural worker and Methodist preacher, led the group known as the Tolpuddle Martyrs in the 1830s, protesting against the extremely low pay that workers were receiving. Loveless and five fellow workers were arrested and sentenced to penal transportation to Australia as a result (no dream holiday, I can assure you). As a result of their stance, Parliament received a petition with 800,000 signatures, and the men were pardoned in 1836 and returned to England. Their case was very influential in the early union movement.

Working against injustice and to help the poor is clearly a good thing, and it can be done in all manner of ways. But how does that relate to what an individual Christian should do in the modern world? Should, or can, a Christian ever go on strike? What about joining in a disruptive protest in the interests of some cause? Is civil disobedience ever right? Is it even allowed?

Romans 13:1–2 says:

> Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

God cares about order, and good rule. He has given authority to civil bodies so that they can see society ordered well and justice practised. Christians are to respect this authority, in whatever body it is constituted. We should not be inherently rebellious, bitter or contentious. As Paul has already said, 'If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone' (Romans 12:18).

It is possible, however, for governing bodies to go beyond the authority that has been given to them. It is possible for them to abuse their authority. Making law that goes against the word of God, for instance, is an abuse of that authority. Outlawing the preaching of the gospel, or conversion, would be a clear example of that. It can also be the case that

through malice or even just carelessness, governing bodies fail to ensure justice or care for the vulnerable, something that also dishonours God. There is scope, then, for Christians to consider civil disobedience from time to time, when a governing body is failing to exercise its authority well.

To do so, however, takes wisdom, considerable thought and prayer. Given the charge of Romans 13, we should never do so lightly or quickly. What, then, might be some of the principles that need to be considered before taking such action?

What other options are there before civil disobedience?

One clear advantage of the Western system of democracy is the opportunity to make objections known to governing bodies. From the local to the national level, there are consultations taking place all the time before laws or regulations are enacted. There are public methods of putting views forward, directly to governing bodies. Appointments can be made with MPs. Letters can be written to them, to councils, to newspapers, to people with influence. There are a great many channels for legal opposition to regulations, even after they are instituted. The process may be inconvenient, laborious, tedious and expensive, but there are options. Most people do not take advantage of their opportunities to make their opinion heard in the government of the country. Most people do not write letters, sign petitions, visit MPs; but before we take part in more disruptive action, these channels should be considered. It is also a service that those with more time can provide for those with less.

It is also worth pointing out that for a Christian to work in industrial relations or politics can be a very practical way of serving others. Christians in management can do their best to ensure fair conditions and wages for workers. It would certainly be best if the need for civil disobedience never arose in the first place.

Why are you taking action?

If you come to some action of civil disobedience – say, a strike – exactly what are you striking over? What is your heart motivation – remember we must be very wary of greed!

Whether the action is for yourself or others also makes a difference. Jesus could be very disruptive, but it was always on behalf of others, not himself. Would you take part in a strike for better conditions for others, even if you were not going to benefit yourself at all? Are demands being made beyond the immediate pay or conditions – for instance, training up more workers?

The serious nature of keeping one's word

We are to keep our word (Matthew 5:37). Agreeing to a contract of work is a serious matter, and such a word should not be broken lightly. However, it could be that an employer has implicitly broken a contract already through unfair actions. For instance, a worker deserves wages (1 Timothy 5:18). Exactly

What is the most effective tactic to change injustice? It is possible to research what actually works to change public opinion (or workplace conditions), and what does not.

what is happening between an employer and employee needs to be considered objectively, and as much as possible without anger. Consult those with experience and training in industrial relations, contract law or other relevant areas.

Responsibilities to others

The single worker without dependants is in a different position from the worker who has to support a family. Capacity to go without pay needs to be considered. Also, responsibility to people cared for in the course of work certainly matters. How much will people suffer through the strike? Care workers, nurses and doctors have more to consider here than, say, refuse collectors or train drivers, although all have a responsibility to others. This is not to say that any of these people can never strike, but the seriousness of the impact on others must be taken into account. Are there alternatives to the strike? Have all other options been exhausted?

Considering the impact on others can work both ways. Perhaps working conditions have become so bad that it has become impossible to care for patients well; that would be an argument in favour of serious action.

The same issue applies to other forms of civil disobedience – protests and publicity stunts. Is the protest endangering others? Is the inconvenience likely to hurt someone's livelihood? Just how much disruption will be caused?

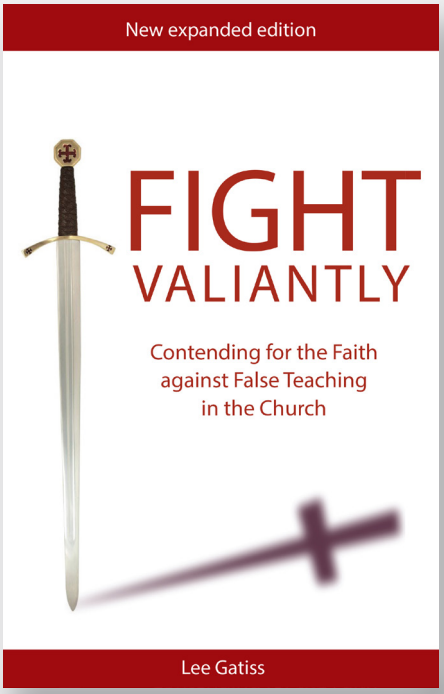
Do your research

I am currently employed by my local city council, working on a project called Sustainable Warmth. It insulates houses. The first Insulate Britain protest on the M25 was 13 September 2021. The first published Sustainable Warmth document that I have found was 11 February 2021. In other words, while Insulate Britain was stopping traffic, the government was already in the process of insulating Britain. I have no knowledge of what Insulate Britain leaders did or did not know, or why they made the decisions they did; but were the extreme tactics really needed?

And do they work? What is the most effective tactic to change injustice? It is possible to research what actually works to change public opinion (or workplace conditions), and what does not. This should be part of any strategy, even when passions are running high. In fact, the more strongly you feel motivated by injustice in the world, the more you should be motivated to do serious research about how to change it.

Should Christians take part in civil disobedience? The answer is not absolutely yes and not absolutely no. Each case needs to be considered dispassionately, in consultation with others, with biblical wisdom, and prayerfully. All action should also be taken calmly and with compassion, seeking peace with others, with recognition that this is often not at all easy. Christians should certainly not be quick to judge one another about whether such action is undertaken or not.

Kirsten Birkett is Theological Consultant to Church Society.



This is a new, revised and expanded edition, including additional stories of contending, especially in the context of the Living in Love and Faith process.

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).

Prayer Diary: May

14 Surbiton Hill, Christ Church (Southwark) – Vicar, John Shepherd. Please pray for wisdom and courage in remaining faithful to God's word in every area, including how we respond to the proposals from the Bishops around sexuality. Pray that the Lord might continue to help us 'live and share the Good News of Jesus in Surbiton and the world'.

15 Talke, St Martin (Lichfield) – P-in-C, Simon Tomkins. We have quite a few housebound members of the church family – please pray we would care well for them; pray also for wisdom in making decisions about our future in the CofE.

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

17 Pray for the ongoing legal issues surrounding the Prayers of Love and Faith. Pray that there will be clarity over the change in doctrine and liturgy that is proposed.

Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit. John 15:5

18 Tewkesbury, Holy Trinity (Gloucester) – Vicar, Stephen Walker. We give thanks to God for the new people joining the church and the new outreach and prayer initiatives. Please pray for Simon Phillips being ordained in June who will be Holy Trinity's first curate. Please pray for housing provision for Simon and the family.

19 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.

20 Tollard Royal* (Salisbury) – Vacancy.

21 Pray for the Latimer Trust and its publications ministry.

22 Pray that ministers would teach their congregations clearly and faithfully what the Bible says about issues of the day.

Have nothing to do with false teachers

Tony Cannon shows how it is false teachers who cause divisions within the Church.

Well, that's not very friendly, is it Tony? Not very unifying of you to say that, is it, especially when Jesus prayed for unity the night before he died? After all, Jesus said that the world will know we are his disciples by our love for each other. He didn't say 'by having nothing to do with each other'!

Well, yes, that's all very true and very important. And like you I often squirm with shame and embarrassment when Christian brothers and sisters keep taking pot-shots at each other – made so much easier, and therefore worse, by social media. But though the opening paragraph is definitely the truth, and nothing but the truth… it's not the whole truth. It's not everything Jesus or the apostles have to say on the matter.

At the first 'ReNew' conference organised by Church Society and Anglican Mission in England back in 2013, there was a strong call from those present for the leaders to try to work together with as many evangelicals as possible for the sake of the gospel in the Anglican church in England. So, I'm thrilled to the core to see how the Church of England Evangelical Council (CEEC) have united nearly every brand of evangelical within the Church of England to fight for the truth of God's word at a time such as this. This is surely the kind of unity Jesus prayed for!

But we have clear instructions from Jesus and the apostles concerning how to spot and respond to false teaching and, therefore, false teachers. I'm reading Luke's gospel with a non-Christian friend at the moment, and one of the (many) things that is blowing him away is Jesus' hard-spoken condemnation of the Pharisees for their teaching, which twisted and changed God's word. 'Hypocrites' he called them, amongst other things. Well, that's not very friendly is it, Tony?! No, it's not! But as my friend is increasingly seeing, if Jesus is who he claims to be, fully God as well as fully human, he has the authority to say it as he sees it – and he does! Christ determines what is right from what is wrong in everything.

Is it a salvation issue?

It is clear that Christ has a huge issue with those given the task of explaining God's way of salvation to people, who do it so falsely that, Jesus tells them, they make converts to their teaching 'twice as much a child of hell as [they] are.' (Matthew 23:15) For Jesus, the subtleties of what you can and can't do on the Sabbath, for example, are secondary. The issue for Jesus is whether it is a *salvation* issue on which we disagree. Does following a particular Christian's teaching make someone 'twice as much a child of hell as [they] are'?

The great presenting issue of our time is that of sexual activity outside of a heterosexual marriage. Is such sex sinful, or is it something which God applauds and therefore 'blesses'? I'm not going to make the case for it being sinful in God's eyes – that has been done so often and so convincingly elsewhere – so just

one passage will suffice: 'Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.' (1 Corinthians 6:9–10)

Following February's General Synod, it is now completely clear that the overriding view of the current House of Bishops is that, within a committed and faithful relationship, sexual activity between people of the same sex is something God applauds and therefore 'blesses'. So, the Church of England should go and do likewise. But for those of us within the Church of England who are committed to its doctrine, revealed in Scripture and witnessed to in its historic formularies (*The Thirty-Nine Articles*, the *Book of Common Prayer* and the Ordinal)… well we just can't! How could we pronounce God's blessing on something God says will stop people inheriting the Kingdom of God?

Relationships with false teachers

How then are we to handle our relationships with those teachers in our denomination who teach falsely on this (or any salvation) issue? When I was asked by the then new (and orthodox evangelical) Bishop of Guildford if I would represent the diocese on the 'Facilitated Conversations' (the precursor to Living in Love and Faith), I really wanted to support and encourage him. But as I looked at the teaching of the New Testament, I had to decline and I

Prayer Diary: May

23 Pray for the Church Society Council meeting today, for useful discussions and wise decisions. For Andrew Towner as Chairman.

24 Upper Chelsea, St Simon, Zelotes (London) – Vicar, Mike Neville. Pray for the PCC as it considers whether to request Alternative Episcopal Oversight and for wisdom as we consider our response to the Living in Love and Faith proposals. For developing the vision for the church Home Groups and how they are overseen.

25 Pray for the Bishop of Ebbsfleet's regional conference in London today, with input from Church Society.

26 Wallington, Holy Trinity (Southwark) – Vicar, James Hills. Praise God for our recent vision series and the growth of our church; pray for people to become part of the church family and that we'd help them to be transformed by Jesus. Pray for us to enjoy the Lord, both when we're together and throughout the week, that our faith would be infectious to others.

27 Pray for the Government and the influence of Christians in Parliament.

The word of the Lord proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.
2 Samuel 22:31

28 Pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on our nation.

29 Uphill, Weston-Super-Mare, St Nicholas (Bath & Wells) – Vicar, Mark Madeley. We give thanks for real signs of numerical and spiritual growth over recent months. Please pray that we can continue to build on this and find many more disciples for the Lord Jesus.

30 Wallington, St Patrick (Southwark) – Vicar, David M King.

31 Pray for Kirsten Birkett's work as Theological Consultant, and Assistant Editor of *The Global Anglican*, to be prayerful and biblical.

The teaching of the New Testament is clear: have nothing to do with, do not partner with and keep away from, those who teach contrary to God's word written on salvation issues.

explained why (which he took very graciously, I have to say):

- First, because of the emotional impact such false teaching has on me, which many orthodox believers are mentioning after General Synod. As the psalmist says, 'Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for your law is not obeyed.' (Psalm 119:136).
- Second, because it's about the Christian faith entrusted to all Christians – including me as an ordained minister – from Jesus and his apostles through Jude.
  'Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a licence for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.' (Jude 3–4)
  (How often have congregation members asked me 'Who on earth appointed bishops and clergy who don't believe the Bible?')
  Literally, this false teaching uses God's grace and mercy as a reason to allow Christians to commit sexual immorality. And at the same time, it denies Jesus' unique right as every Christian's Sovereign and Lord to make the rules we are to live by.
- Third, having spotted the false teaching and the false teachers, what should we do?
  'I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.' (Romans 16:17)

The cause of divisions

Make no mistake, those wanting to change the Bible's clear teaching on marriage and sex are the ones causing the division in Christ's church, not those wishing to remain obedient to God's word. In Ephesians, Paul tells us not to be partners with such people (Ephesians 5:3, 5–7. See also 1 Corinthians 5:11; Titus 3:9–10; 2 John 9–10.)

Which brings us to today, and the issue now facing so many orthodox Christian believers in the Church of England – clergy, wardens, PCC members and congregations. The teaching of the New Testament is clear: have nothing to do with, do not partner with and keep away from, those who teach contrary to God's word written on salvation issues. What so very many now have to work out, prayerfully, carefully and graciously, is exactly what that looks like for each of us. May God have mercy!

Tony Cannon is Regional Director of Church Society for the South and East of England.

Drawing lines

Lee Gatiss sets out some of the Bible's teaching on doctrinal discipline.

There will be times when, if we are to be faithful to the Lord Jesus, we will be forced to *defend* the truth of God's word in public, even when it is uncomfortably counter-cultural. We will need to *disassociate* ourselves from false teaching and those who propagate it, however painful that may be – particularly today from those who would deceive us on issues of sexual conduct by trying to recalibrate our morality (Ephesians 5:3–7). We must *disobey* orders which contradict Christ's or bless what God has not. We must enforce godly *discipline*, driving out those who are recalcitrantly immoral and leading others astray (1 Corinthians 5:9–13). We must peacefully *disrupt* and financially *degrade* the capabilities of those who scandalise the church and seek to undermine its foundations from within. And we must in every way *deny* the deadly doctrine underpinning such attempts to turn the grace of God into a licence for immorality (Jude 4).

Clarifying the message of the gospel

Doing nothing is not an option, when wolves inevitably intrude themselves into the flock. Passivity is action; but it's the wrong kind of action. If we know that something needs to be done, but shy away from controversy for the sake of a quiet life, that is not being faithful. James says, 'whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin' (James 4:17). So what we are about is defending, disassociating, disobeying, disciplining, disrupting, degrading, and denying. It is essential that we examine our practice in this area, and ask how we are doing those things or enabling and empowering them. The purpose of drawing lines is to clarify the glorious message of the gospel itself, without which we are lost.

Whatever actions we take, after appropriate investigation, careful thought, prayer, and godly counsel, it is vital that we persuasively demonstrate how and why we feel this action is demanded of us by God's word. We must communicate this in a courteous and sober-minded way with gentleness and humility, remembering that sometimes, not everyone who disagrees with us is 'an enemy' (2 Thessalonians 3:15). As Paul said, 'Let your reasonableness be known to everyone' (Philippians 4:5), which means reacting in a proportional way, not writing off every archdeacon because of the actions of one, or the whole House of Bishops because of the teaching of some. Speak evil of no one, avoid quarrelling, be gentle, and show perfect courtesy towards all people (Titus 3:2). Precipitous, bullish divisiveness for the sake of personal glory is not only unattractive but exposes our own warped and sinful motivations for all to see; this is not the way to promote and advance the gospel of Jesus.

The breakdown of doctrinal discipline

One of our biggest problems in the Church of England today is the breakdown of doctrinal discipline at the national level. At local level,

This is a core responsibility of any shepherd, that they hold firmly to the trustworthy word and are able to instruct others in sound doctrine, refuting those who contradict it.

where parish ministers can act with discretion and authority, discipline can still be applied. But the admonitions to Timothy and Titus about silencing false teachers are not being followed on a larger stage by those with the responsibility for such discipline in Anglican polity. That doesn't mean we need to go actively sniffing out heresy, and meddling in other people's affairs, like an Inquisition. It means guarding the flock and responding to public challenges to the doctrine and practice of the Church. Those legally holding the power to do this are not doing it. Why are those to whom we have entrusted this task not keener to safeguard our spiritual health and wellbeing?

This failure of episcopal discipline causes many problems. It creates ambiguity and uncertainty about our message and makes people question whether we really believe it. It also means that lower authorities, such as presbyters or deanery chapters, will always feel somewhat impertinent and out of their official depth when dealing with unchallenged heresy in the wider church. It is not technically their job to discipline people outside their parish, but the bishops' and archbishops'. When bishops fail to act against scandalous individuals or ministers or even fellow bishops who deny the faith or propagate scandalous heresies, not only is it frustrating for those who have to sit by in legal impotence, but it undermines the credibility of episcopal polity itself and brings the faith into disrepute.

Guarding the flock

The problem is not just with this failure of the bishops, however. All clergy have a responsibility to avoid false teaching and teachers, to set these things before their people and refute them (1 Timothy 4:6; Titus 1:9). It is no good if they know the ins and outs of contemporary heresies affecting their flocks but never take the time to alert people and equip them to handle such challenges to the faith themselves. This is a core responsibility of any shepherd, that they hold firmly to the trustworthy word and are able to instruct others in sound doctrine, refuting those who contradict it (Titus 1:9, 13). Yet ministers are often afraid of stirring up controversy by teaching clearly on these subjects. They keep their views to themselves and hardly ever mention such things in their teaching, because they don't want to alienate people or scare them, or seem to be a negative person. Too rarely do congregations proactively request such teaching. Personally, I absolutely need those who preach to me to warn me and admonish me all the time. As someone who has been an ordained minister for over 20 years, an academic theologian, an itinerant preacher, and a public figure, I can honestly say I know this isn't easy. But I can also say, as an ordinary member of a congregation (since I hear more sermons than I preach), that I have needed such refutation of false ideas and false practices to be applied to me at every stage of my Christian life.

Part of this vital spiritual discipline of applying and promoting the gospel lovingly in a context of opposition, is for ministers to guard their flocks from wolves and teach them how to respond. Section 13 of the Jerusalem Declaration (2008), which underpins the GAFCON movement, says, 'We reject the authority of those churches and leaders who have denied the orthodox faith in word or deed. We pray for them and call on them to repent and return to the Lord. '

This is not a novel approach to such things, but entirely in keeping with patristic and Reformation precedents for dealing with false teaching. Private errors of private persons may be dealt with quietly and privately; but public errors by public persons (e.g. ordained ministers or people who speak and write in public) can be dealt with publicly. Individual ministers and congregations can take practical measures in some of these areas without having to rely on moribund formal and institutional processes.

Ministers have a duty to equip their congregations on the issues facing them and on how to fight valiantly as a soldier of Christ. They must also keep lay leaders and church councils up to speed on the details of what is happening in the wider church. When their current minister leaves they may be entirely at the mercy of the diocese for their next one, and they need to know what they could be faced with. If they move away, they will need to know what to look out for as they seek a new church. There are ways and means of achieving these things, from sermon series, to prayer meeting openers, to regular courses or one-off talks on contemporary issues, to encouraging take-up of church newspapers and blogs. Why not encourage people in your church to join Church Society, or ask the PCC to consider becoming a Church Society Partner Church?

Lee Gatiss is Director of Church Society and author of Fight Valiantly, *from which this edited article is taken (see the advert on page 13).*

Prayer Diary: June

1 Wandsworth, All Saints w Holy Trinity (Southwark) – Vacancy.

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

3 Warboys (Ely) – Rector, Garry Dawson-Jones.

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

5 Washfield* (Exeter) – Team Rector, Stephanie Gordon-Jeffs.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.
Luke 20:17

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

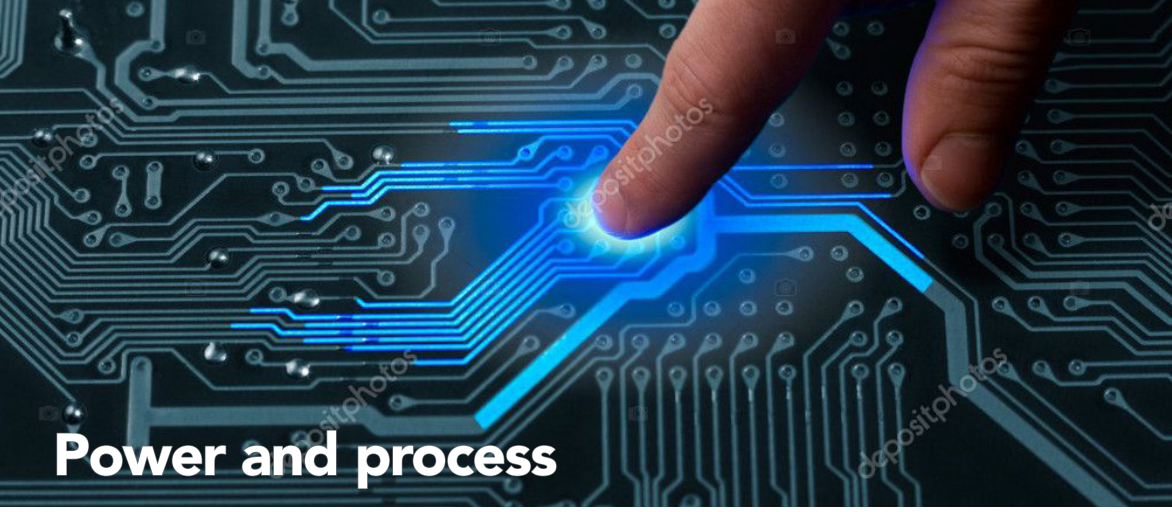
7 Wath (Leeds) – Rector, James Gwyn-Thomas.

8 Pray for the Bishop of Ebbsfleet's regional conference in Leyland today, with input from Church Society.

9 Wembdon, St George (Bath & Wells) – Vicar, Ed Moll. Thank God for recent encouragements. Please pray with us that we would keep making Jesus known, that newcomers would settle and serve, and that we would trust God in uncertain times.

10 Weybread* (St Eds & Ips) – Rector, Susan Loxton. Give thanks for some new life in our village church. The village has a population of only 300. Our monthly services attract anything from 12–20 people; festivals attended by over 100. Benefice services have over 60 attending. Pray for more workers.

11 Wharton, Christ Church (Chester) – Vacancy. Please pray for Christ Church, Wharton as they re-advertise for a vicar and their Associate Minister has announced his departure, that God would calm the congregation and hold them together in faith.



Power and process

Ros Clarke laments the strategy of the House of Bishops at General Synod.

When someone is in a position of power and responsibility, but they use that power unlawfully, that is an abuse of power. Where there is no structure holding people in power to account, that abuse of power becomes tyrannical. If people in power simply ignore or evade the structures which are supposed to hold them to account, that is no less an abuse of power and no less tyrannical.

Underhand strategies

The Church of England, as it is currently constituted, is a complex system of overlapping hierarchies: clergy, synods and staff. Each of these operate at parish, diocesan and national levels (clergy and synods also have a deanery level). It is an unwieldy system, but it is designed to ensure that power is never allowed to go unchecked. Even the archbishops, for example, are subject to the will of General Synod on certain matters.

In recent years, however, it has become increasingly clear that the power of synods is a source of irritation to some in the Church of England. Diocesan and Deanery Synods are merely used as talking shops, a place to disseminate information and discuss ideas, rather than a parliament to scrutinise the policy and practice of the diocese. The same thing is happening at General Synod.

A good example of this is the Vision and Strategy proposed by Stephen Cottrell, the Archbishop of York. While General Synod has been given opportunities to hear presentations on the paper, to discuss its implications and outworkings, and hear some examples of it in practice, they have not once been asked to give their consent to it through a motion, debate and vote. At the most recent meeting of General Synod, the Archbishop gave it as his opinion that General Synod should not be asked about the Vision and Strategy. The equivalent in a parish would be an incumbent telling his PCC that the church's vision and strategy would be decided without their involvement. They would merely be asked to agree the funding for it. No PCC should stand for that! And nor should General Synod.

This is the strategy of the underhand tyrant, telling us that due process has been observed when it has not. We are told that we have adopted this vision when we have had no opportunity to reject it. It is put into practice so that we are too late to turn back from it, before we know whether we approve of it. A few years ago, the House of Bishops adopted a similar strategy with respect to the commendation of baptism liturgy for transgender welcoming ceremonies. No new liturgy was approved, therefore no Synod vote was required. No doctrine, we were told, was being changed. And yet clearly there was a new doctrine around biological sex and gender identity that was simply taken as read.

No change in doctrine?

This is the strategy we see once again with

respect to same-sex relationships. We are told that no doctrine is changing, even though it is. Synod was given the opportunity to discuss things and to welcome whatever the bishops are going to tell us in the revised prayers and the pastoral guidance. Despite multiple legal challenges, questions from the floor, and alternative legal advice which undermined that given to the bishops, the motion that was brought was not held to the standards it should have been. Debates on changing the church's liturgy or doctrine require a two-thirds majority in all three houses of the Synod (bishops, clergy and laity) in order to pass. Because the bishops insisted that they were not changing either doctrine or liturgy, only a 50 per cent majority was required. This passed – but only just. It was nowhere near a two-thirds majority.

Denying the due process enabled the bishops to get synodical approval for something it should not have done. Honest admission that the proposed prayers do represent a change in doctrine and liturgy would have invoked a process that would have failed. It was striking that, other than the applause for the excellent work of the chair for the debate, the loudest, longest and most inclusive cheer came when Stephen Hofmeyr made a point of order, observing that all the amendments to this motion which had been brought by the Bishop of London on behalf of the House of Bishops were being shut down by the bishops. It did not matter how the clergy or laity voted, the bishops were able to control the process.

Prayer Diary: June

12 Pray for Ros Clarke and others on the Standing Commission for the Five Guiding Principles meeting over the next two days.

13 Pray for the Bishop of Ebbsfleet's regional conference in Derby today, with input from Church Society.

14 Whinburgh* (Norwich) – P-in-C, Tim Weatherstone.

15 Pray for the *Global Anglican* editorial Board meeting in Cambridge today, for Lee Gatiss as Chairman and Peter Jensen as Editor. Pray also for the Bishop of Ebbsfleet's regional conference in Exeter today, with input from Church Society.

16 Pray for the evangelical bishops, especially those who voted against the bishops' proposals at General Synod. Pray for gospel faithfulness and courage. Pray that they may be effective in holding the House of Bishops to account as the Prayers of Love and Faith are revised and pastoral guidance is written.

…he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Philippians 2:8

17 Wimborne, St John (Salisbury) – Vicar, Peter Breckwoldt. Pray for our Church Office – for new staff joining us. Pray for our children and young people to come to know Jesus. Pray for our good pastoral support for everyone. Give thanks for new members who have joined us.

18 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.

19 Woking (Old), St Peter (Guildford) – P-in-C, Jonathan Thomas. Please pray for our new Curate, Lucy Bush, with her family as they move into the parish and begin ministry with us. Please also pray for our outreach amongst children, youth and families especially through our Refresh drop-in café and our Energise service for families.

When Paul tells the Romans to submit to the authorities, this is not a blanket statement of submission in any and every circumstance. There is a good and godly need to stand up against injustice, deceit and harsh treatment. Those in a position of influence have a responsibility to protect those who are most vulnerable. We all have a responsibility to undermine those who are abusing their power.

But it is hard. It is hard to recognise that our leaders are acting like tyrants, especially when so often they are kind, gentle, pastoral people. It is hard to go against the principle of obedience that is so strongly ingrained in all who seek to follow Christ. Throughout the Scriptures, we are shown again and again how important it is to obey God, even when we don't understand why, or when it seems to go against all reason. There are instructions about obeying human authorities, whether in the form of parents, employers, kings or judges. We must take these seriously and seek to live quiet and lawful lives.

Principled disobedience

But against this background of obedience we find a counternarrative of principled disobedience in extreme circumstances, such as:

- Shiphrah and Puah disobey Pharoah's instruction to kill the Israelite boys (Exodus 1:17).
- Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refuse to worship Nebuchadnezzar's idol (Daniel 3:12).
- Daniel continues to pray to Yahweh when it is made illegal (Daniel 6:10–12).
- Mordecai disobeys the command to bow down to Haman (Esther 3:2).
- The wise men disobey Herod's instruction to return and report about the baby (Matthew 2:8–12).
- The apostles continue to preach the gospel despite arrests and warnings not to do so (Acts 4:19–20).

In all these cases, the response of Peter and John in Acts 4:19 is appropriate: 'Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you [the human authority], or to him?'

When the bishops are setting themselves above the law by changing the doctrine of the church while claiming not to do so, they are breaking their own oaths of obedience. It is the right and responsibility of clergy, who are the shepherds of God's church, to protect the people from them. The remedy we need is godly bishops! The church is in desperate need of bishops who will take their responsibility as pastors seriously and lead the church back into all truth and godliness.

We must pray!

One of the most encouraging things that has happened at General Synod in the past year was the election of the members of the Crown Nominations Commission, the group responsible for appointing diocesan bishops. Two-thirds of this group are now evangelical or traditional catholic, with an orthodox position on sexuality. We can pray for them to be able to appoint a new generation of biblically faithful, godly bishops.

The legal challenge to the bishops' approach is ongoing. Pray for better legal counsel to be heard and taken seriously, so that the bishops are constrained not to act beyond their remit.

The amendment which was made to the motion is intended to ensure that the bishops do not change the doctrine of the Church of England, nor take any steps indicative of such a change. Pray that this will be understood and heeded by the bishops. Pray for evangelical bishops to speak boldly and hold their fellow bishops to account in this.

Pray for your bishops. Pray that God will have mercy on them. Pray that they will fulfil their calling to be faithful pastors and teachers, guarding the flock from false teaching, not leading them astray.

Ros Clarke is Associate Director of Church Society and a lay member of General Synod.

Church Society

EQUIPPING GOD'S PEOPLE TO LIVE GOD'S WORD

Join us...

Partner 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. Partner churches (formerly known as Supporter Churches) can also call on Church Society for advice and support for their minister, PCC and wardens, e.g. during an interregnum. Partner churches get a badge to display on their websites and a printed certificate to display in their buildings.

More information is on the Church Society website: **churchsociety.org**

New Partner Churches

St Paul's, Banbury
St Botolph's, Barton Seagrave
St George's, Wembdon
St Thomas', Kilnhurst
St John's, Walthamstow

Geoff Pick / St Botolph, Barton Seagrave
CC BY-SA 2.0

Pam Goodey / Wembdon Church
CC BY-SA 2.0

Prayer Diary: June

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 parish clergy in the Church of England to uphold biblical teaching on marriage and human sexuality. Pray that they will not be afraid to teach the gospel of sin and repentance.

22 Wolverhampton, St Luke (Lichfield) – Vicar, Richard Espin-Bradley.

23 Pray for the Anglican Mission in England (AMiE), the Anglican Network in Europe (ANiE), and the Anglican Convocation in Europe (ACE), that God's kingdom may grow through their work.

24 Woodham Walter (Chelmsford) – P-in-C, Julie Willmot.

25 Pray for the ministry of readers and the responsibilities of church wardens and members of PCCs.

26 Worthing, Holy Trinity (Chichester) – Vacancy.

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

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

28 Worthing, St Matthew (Chichester) – Vicar, Paul Taylor.

29 Pray for leaders and young people as preparations are made for Christian camps this summer.

30 Worthing, St George (Chichester) – Vicar, John Brook.

Thank you for praying with us.

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

The prayer diary items above are also accessible via the PrayerMate app: http://praynow4.org/churchsociety.
We also produce a prayer list sheet of all the parishes we are patron of. If you would like to be sent this, please contact the office.

Crossway

Spring 2023/167
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.

Crossway is also available by annual subscription. Our 2023 rates, which include postage, are:
UK: £10
Overseas: £17

Individual copies are available from Church Society at £1.50 plus postage. If you place an order of 10 or more copies, we will send them to you postage free.

Church Society (Dean Wace House)
Ground Floor, Centre Block
Hille Business Park
132 St Albans Road
Watford WD24 4AE

Tel 01923 255410
Web churchsociety.org
Email admin@churchsociety.org

Church Society is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England No. 213142 and a registered charity No. 249574.

All rights reserved
ISSN 0261 8915

We welcome enquiries from readers who would like to reproduce material from *Crossway* – but please always seek permission before publishing. Church Society does not necessarily endorse all the views of every author.

Scripture quotations are from:
The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (E.S.V.) © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

THE Global Anglican
Established in 1879 as *The Churchman*

The Global Anglican

The March 2023 issue of *The Global Anglican*, an international theological journal produced quarterly by Church Society, is now out:

- Editorial – 'The Challenge of, and the Challenge to, Gafcon': *Peter Jensen*
- 'Resisting Neopagan Anglicanism in the Anglican Communion': *Foley Beach*
- 'Lambeth 22 to Gafcon 23 – The future of Global Anglicanism': *Henry Scriven*
- 'Expounding the Bible for Africans': *Stephen Ayodeji A. Fagbemi*
- 'What Matters in Global Theological Education?': *Willis Salier*
- 'First Corinthians 5 and Contemporary Questions of Sex, Gender and Transgender Identities': *Rachel Gilson*

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.'

Church Society
EQUIPPING GOD'S PEOPLE TO LIVE GOD'S WORD