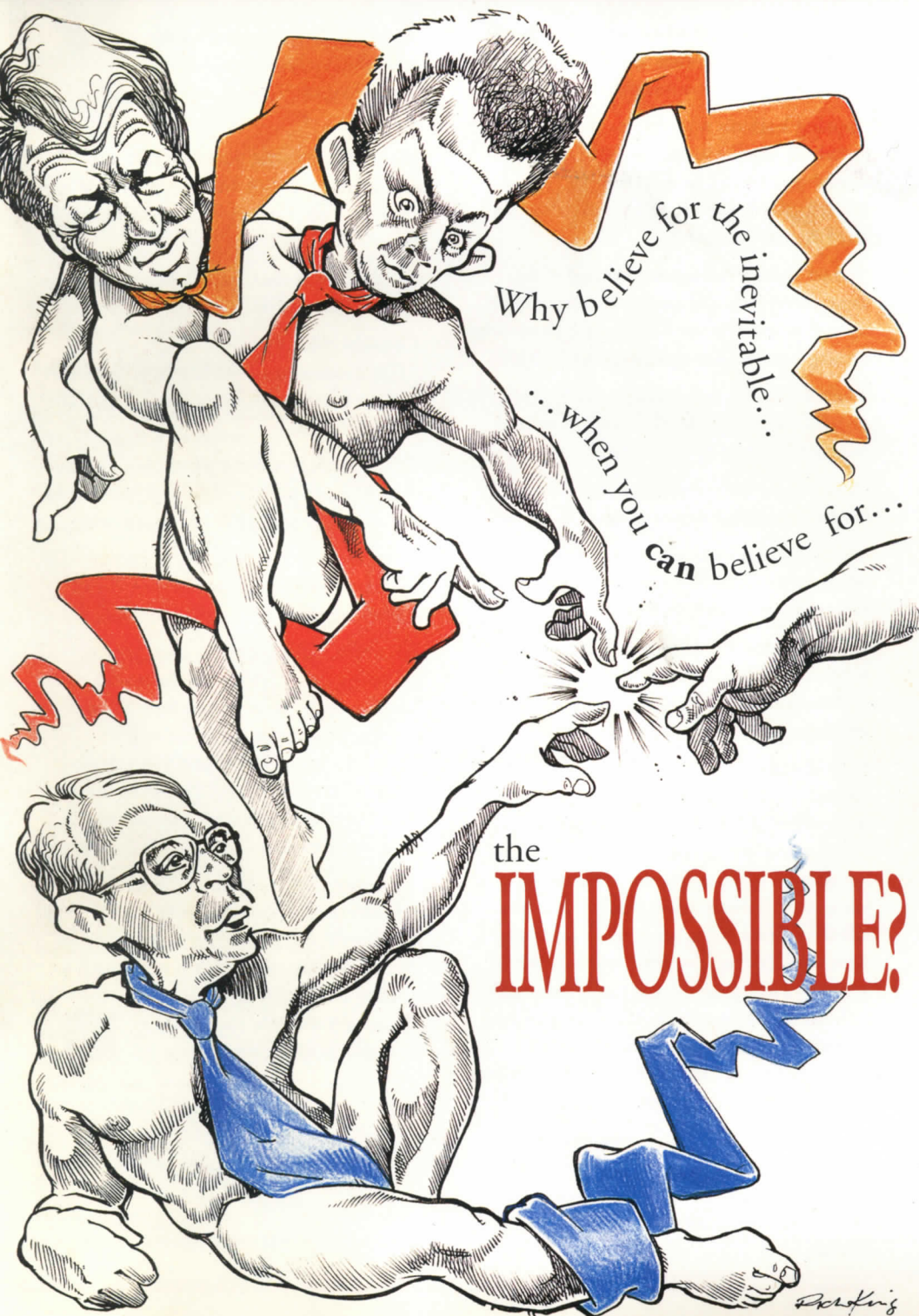
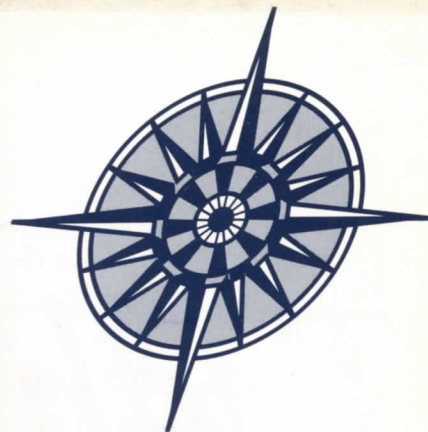


# Compass

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF NON-RELIGIOUS CHRISTIANITY

£1.95

VOL.2 NO.1



**GERALD COATES**

*Where's the justice?*

**PATRICK DIXON**

*Truth or consequences*

**MIKE APICHELLA**

*Three men and a vote*

**SIMON HUGHES**

*Season and illuminate*

**MIKE MORRIS**

*Apocalypse on your doorstep*

**ANDREA MacPHERSON**

*Britain's political system*

**CHRIS SEATON**

*How to be a local hero*

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# Editorial

**W**e live in a land where 'justice is a game', as Bob Dylan sang. Everyone is equal, though some are more equal than others.

Looking back on my education and a decade of regular work, the head of our school was a man, as was the principal of the art school, as were the people who ran our Brethren Assembly.

And yet again it was a man in charge of the department store; and another man led the team of postmen where I worked for 18 months earning money while starting a house church.

Their leadership style was brusque to put it politely. I don't ever recall meeting a woman in a senior role in all those years.

As for people with disabilities, they may as well not have existed as they were rarely if ever seen!

So, can we conclude, that society in general is run by a bunch of ill-mannered, able-bodied, male chauvinist, control freaks?

There's no doubt that women have had a rough deal. That is true of those with or without learning difficulties. It is a deal of which most men seem blissfully unaware.

### Consider this:

Women in China have been subject to forced sterilisation, designed to deliberately affect the future workforce; in Saudi Arabia women are not allowed to drive, limiting their ability to work at all; in Algeria 500 women have been killed for either being feminists or revealing their unveiled faces; in Brazil wife murderers are knowingly given the soft touch treatment; in India 6,000 women are killed every year by husbands or relatives in order to collect a second dowry; in Pakistan female rape victims are subject to prison sentences for 'adultery'.

Yet elsewhere millions of young girls and older women are forced into prostitution and sexual deviancy – for cash. Slavery is confronted with a mere shake of the head or a 'tut-tut'.

As for those with special needs, others still hardly know how to treat them without embarrassment or with a condescending attitude.

Many buildings are not wheelchair accessible and wheelchair users feel embarrassed at the constant fuss that is created whenever they enter a public building.

So what about the Church? Are we facing those injustices and doing any better?


### Consider this:

"This much seems beyond doubt, the future is theirs [charismatic evangelicals],' says The Sunday Times.

'Evangelicals are on the march – out of the church, down the corridors of power and on the airwaves', proclaims The Independent.

'They are now a force for social change – far more powerful than many of their critics realise,' observes The Daily Telegraph.

But are we? If the future is ours, how are we preparing for it? If we're on the march, where are we going? And if we're a force for social change, what about the millions with disabilities in the UK alone? Are women being released to live out their lives, realise their hopes and fulfil their dreams the way God wants them to?

If we evangelicals (and that includes the Toronto-Blessed, renewal-intoxicated charismatics like myself) are really a force for change, we'd best make sure our approach to equality and fairness is in line with God's. Then we can give the right answer when we're asked, 'whose side are you on?' 

Pioneer Team Leader and Director of Pioneer Trust



COVER ILLUSTRATION  
BY RICH KING

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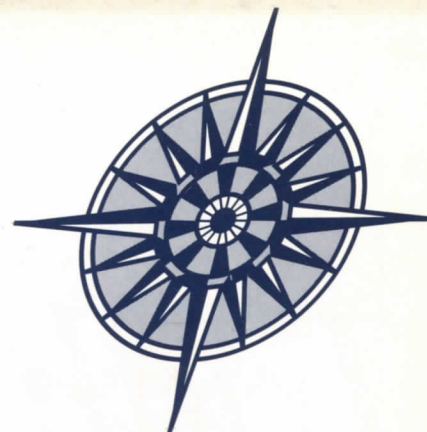
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# Truth or consequences

*The mother of all Parliaments has laid some rotten eggs. Patrick Dixon tells Cynthia Rollanson-Williams about his new book 'The Truth About Westminster'*

**C**ONCERNED Christians await with bated breath what the millennium will bring – particularly in terms of political change. What is the future for us as a nation?

'Only one in ten of the population believes what a minister says on TV – compared to teachers and doctors who are believed by 80 per cent of the country,' says Patrick Dixon, who's researched these issues. 'It means whatever is said about arms to Iraq, or health service expenditure, is likely to be rejected as pure party propaganda.'

'So what's the point of reading a political manifesto when you think it will be abandoned once the party gets into power? The loss of trust is serious. It's the greatest threat to democracy perhaps we've ever seen.'

Dixon's own concerns led him to seek out the truth about Westminster. He's already well known for his writings on AIDS and genetics.

'People say British politics is in a



ILLUSTRATION – STUART SMITH

terrible mess. But British democracy is one of the least corrupt in Europe – certainly worldwide. We have a remarkable track record in integrity and public life.'

However, there've been changes. Dixon points to a slide of standards over the last 20-40 years. The public

are justifiably anxious. They see British politics as the mother of all parliaments – and feel we should have the highest standards.

'People feel they're seeing a culture where MPs are happy to accept money to put down questions, to be paid to advise business and in subtle ways blackmail other colleagues to vote against their conscience. That gives rise to great concern.'

Dixon feels there's a huge gap between what ministers discuss in private and what the public knows through statements – like the recent Scott Enquiry. 'That confirms people's worst suspicions that MPs are not to be trusted,' he said.

Recovering public confidence will be a lengthy process. 'It could take 20 to 30 years to undo the damage of the last two decades.'

The media would lead us to believe there's an undercurrent of corruption at Westminster. Dixon feels it's more a case of 'dishonesty'.

'Very few members of parliament are corrupt,' he said. 'If you look for examples of financial corruption,



you're far more likely to find them in local government.'

Of Westminster, Dixon views the 'culture' as corrupting. 'It erodes integrity, it puts pressures on people to vote for things which they believe are wrong.'

He's heard many examples of undue pressure being placed on MPs. 'All kinds of tactics have been used to apply pressure in MPs' personal lives in order to get them to toe the party line.'

Over the last 18 months Dixon has spoken to numerous people from different parts of the political process – inside and outside parliament. 'It's been a disturbing time. Some of the interviews have made my hair stand on end.'

Some of those interviews may never see the light of day due to libel laws and the need to protect the identity of individuals. Publishing a book on the state of parliament has become very difficult.

It's hard to comprehend that such findings may never be fully declared. Yet in contrast the press have access to certain information and divulge it at will. 'Much press coverage has been sensational, unfair, unjust and very damaging to individuals,' said Dixon. 'There are many MPs who've had a rough time.'

Unless that situation is rectified, it may affect British politics in a manner not anticipated, he believes. 'There'll be a whole generation unwilling to enter politics because of how others have been taken to pieces.'

So is the media to blame? Is it totally unjust and immoral? Dixon is not sold on seeing the media in a totally bad light. 'The media has had a

powerful role in uncovering a number of situations. There wouldn't have been a Scott Enquiry if not for the courage of some newspaper editors, and the relentless investigation by a number of journalists.

'I don't think the Government would be taking the BSE scare so seriously – were it not for the fact that the media had been digging around that issue for a long time.'

Politicians and journalists are ranked together when it comes to public opinion. 'Most people don't believe all they read in the press either,' Dixon explained.

Our beliefs – spiritual or political – are not usually kept separate. But how does God's word relate to Westminster?

Dixon believes Christian values are the only values likely to work in political life in the long term: 'speaking well of others, being truthful and open, willing to admit that you have made a mistake'. But those aren't upheld.

'Leaders of both parties rubbish each other continually. They accuse each other of lying, distortion and are constantly trying to destroy each other's arguments.'

'I long for the day when John Major will congratulate the Opposition leader on the excellent speech he made the previous night – when Tony Blair will support the Prime Minister, in the interest of the country. After all, they believe

## A new dawn

Patrick Dixon perceives the beginnings of a new movement of God's people. He stresses there is an urgent need for two things:

\* for Christians to become more involved in political life, whether as local councillors or constituency candidates;

\* for non-political Christian movements - like the Movement for Christian Democracy - which unite all those of different parties in the common cause of seeing Christian values embedded into our national life.

in many of the same things.

'Why does it take war to make peace in Parliament? We see positive statements of unity across the main parties when it comes to the way ahead for Ulster. But why should it take sectarian atrocities to produce consensus?'

Dixon has produced his own analysis. And it contains a manifesto for change – 'democracy to inspire public confidence beyond the next millennium'.

Said Dixon, 'I see signs of a political revolution. Not only is there massive disenchantment with politics as it is currently practised, but also I perceive the beginnings of a new movement of people, many of whom are Christians.'

'We're talking about personal issues – character issues, matters of integrity. Personal integrity is going to become increasingly important in politics.'



Cynthia Rollanson-Williams is a freelance writer and a member of New Life Christian Fellowship, North London.





# Three men and a

*What do politicians really believe? Mike Apichella asked three Christian MP's to unpack their personal faith and public policy*

**I**NFORMATION empowers people. Yet despite a wealth of information concerning politicians, when it comes to their faith, little is published. But voters have a right to know what politicians believe.

So Compass spoke with MPs David Atkinson (Con), Donald Anderson (Lab) and David Alton (Lib Dem). Not surprisingly, all three believe their parties espouse Christian values – although none claims theirs is a ‘Christian party’. How do they harmonise their beliefs with policies some consider contrary to faith?

## **DAVID ATKINSON (Cons)**

Conscience plays a large part for Conservative MP David Atkinson.

**‘As a Roman Catholic, I accept the doctrine that forbids divorce. I also recognise that doctrine cannot apply universally’**

DAVID ATKINSON

the Soviet Union, CCCP –  
Conscience, Country, Constituency

‘I apply my own standards and values to whatever judgements I have to make as a member of Parliament,’ he said. ‘My approach is the old anagram for

and Party – in that order.’

After much criticism, the Government agreed to amend the Family Law Bill, a bill which has split Christian opinion over its effect on marriage. ‘As a Roman Catholic, I accept the doctrine that forbids divorce,’ said Atkinson.

‘I also recognise that doctrine cannot apply universally. Other Christian churches approve divorce. So I agree with current legislation which tries to take some of the sting and damage out of divorce proceedings.

‘What one cannot do is legislate that families stay together. That’s not the job of Government. It’s the job of the Church to take a lead in such matters.’

The Conservative party bills itself as the party of the family. But just how committed to the family is a political party which first froze and then removed the married couple’s allowance?

‘Our current tax system is geared towards fostering family unity. I support that,’ maintained Atkinson. ‘There remains a marriage allowance as opposed to a single person’s

allowance which is designed to encourage families to better bear the burden of bringing up a family.

‘Finally, there is the child benefit that goes straight to the mothers for the purpose of bringing up their children.’

So how Christian is Britain?

‘Let me stress that ours is fortunately a secular





# vote

country rather than a religious country, such as Iran, where there's no tolerance or freedom for people who aren't Muslims. I'd always support Britain being a secular country.'

I wanted to know why British politicians seem reluctant to discuss their faith publicly. 'I cannot speak for others. Some might hesitate to take part in interviews of this kind because

they regard their faith – or lack of it – to be a matter for them alone.

'Faith is personal. Politicians ought to be free to do as they see fit when pressed about such matters. I can only say that I have no reservation about speaking about my faith.'

Why should Christians vote Conservative? 'I particularly support the party's line on issues of individual freedom and acceptance of personal responsibility. I agree that Big Government – high taxing government – should be resisted in favour of lower taxes and individuals being encouraged to accept greater responsibility for themselves and their families.

'Those are Christian principles. But I can see how others may not agree. The choice is entirely up to the voters.'

## **DONALD ANDERSON (Lab)**

Next, we spoke with Labour MP Donald Anderson. Tony Blair openly speaks of his Christian faith. As a party leader, is he unique?

'More than any other party leader today, Tony Blair does draw on deep wells of Christian faith,' said Anderson. 'That's evident in his speeches and actions. His vocabulary and principles are fundamentally Christian if one investigates them carefully.'

It may be argued that the Labour Party grew out of the Methodist tradition. How true has the party remained to its Christian forebears?

'All parties reflect changes in society and the decline in Christian worship', he said. 'So far as the Labour party is concerned, it's true

that many in the early days learned their speaking skills and gained their confidence and worldview from their Christian faith.'

Is it politically correct for candidates to uphold their Christian faith?

'Today, all parties contain Christians who prayerfully seek to apply their beliefs to the complex and often morally ambiguous issues they face.

'There are clear dangers in wearing one's Christian beliefs on one's sleeve in politics. I

think for example of the Christian Democrat parties on the Continent who often give a bad name to Christ because the people who wear their label fall into corruption.

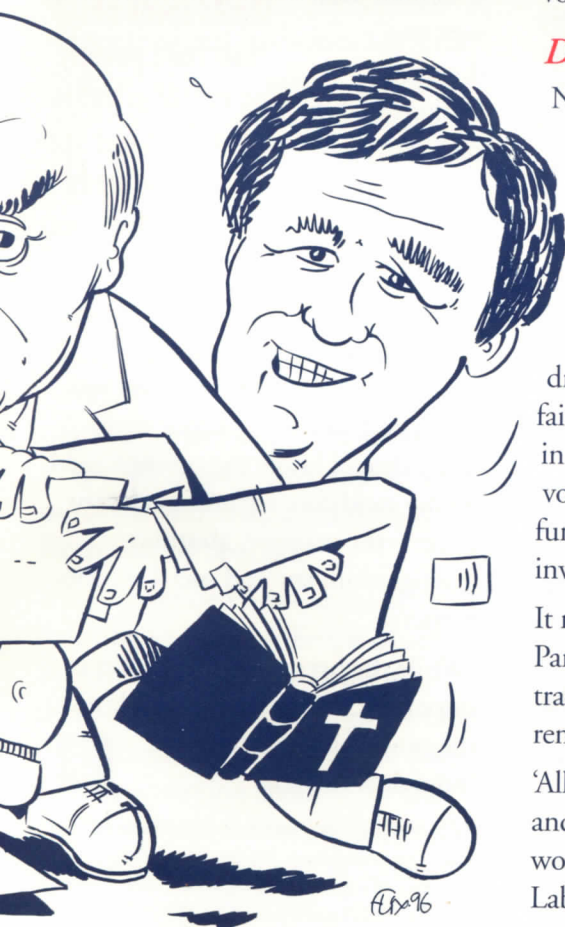
'Moreover, when politicians get into the messy compromises as they inevitably do, there'll be some Christians who'll feel hurt. Faith should come across in the principles and actions – not merely the words – of the individual candidate.'

How does Anderson manage to combine his faith with his work? 'I was a patron of the Keep Sunday Special campaign', he confessed. 'My Christian principles didn't prevent me from working with others who had different views from me.

'We still could agree to keep Sunday special for different but equally valid reasons. Of course, sometimes some

**'There have been resolutions in favour of abortion. No attempt has been made to force me to obey a particular policy. And I wouldn't obey whips on that if they did.'**

**DONALD ANDERSON**





degree of compromise was required to ensure that one got at least half one's loaf. For many Christians acting on moral absolutes, that's a hard lesson to learn.

Few people say Britain is a Christian nation. Did he agree?

'Fred Catherwood has made the analogy that we're drawing from a stock in a cupboard, but we're not replacing that stock. So today we are benefiting from our stock of Christian heritage – but sadly, we're not adding to it.'

Emily's List is a scheme designed to favour prospective female Labour MPs who would in return promise to embrace an aggressively pro-abortion stance in legislation. It's been severely criticised in many quarters. Compass asked Anderson to explain Labour's abortion policy.

'There have been resolutions at Conference in favour of abortion. No attempt, however, has been made to force me to obey a particular policy. And I wouldn't obey whips on that if they did.'

'On abortion I broadly think that the present compromise of 24 weeks – based on current medical research which determines when a fetus may survive on its own – is the best practical response we can make at the moment.'

'An absolute ban on abortion clearly wouldn't work. So the question is one of applying one's Christian principle to the facts of the real world.'

### **DAVID ALTON (Lib Dem)**

Finally, Compass spoke to Liberal Democrat MP David Alton. He said

the tap roots of his party go back to 19th century Christian non-conformists and Liberals.

*'As Christians we should vote for the party which reflects Christian values to the largest extent. For Christians it is often a choice between imperfects but not to choose is in itself a choice which creates a vacuum for non-Christian influences to enter.'*

WILFRED WONG

'Today like other parties, we've moved away from those roots,' he explained. 'Nevertheless, there are many members who take their Christian faith seriously. There's no claim today, however, that we're a Christian party.'

How has his Christian faith affected his relationship with the leadership of the Liberal Democrats? 'I've worked with Paddy Ashdown on a number of issues where we were in full agreement. For instance, we agree on issues like Bosnia.'

'However, I opposed my party's attempt to make abortion a party policy in 1992. Paddy and I also disagreed on the issue of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, for the abortion of handicapped babies right up to and even during their birth.'

How would Alton like to see Christians engage their culture politically? 'I'd like my party and the others to embrace the whole of the Christian Gospel – not just a cafeteria Christianity where you take the parts you like and leave the awkward bits.'

Since many of his colleagues in the Commons prefer to keep their faith private, how does he justify using his

faith to formulate policy?

'I do think Christians should speak about their faith publicly. You

cannot privatise your faith and opt out of the world around you. Jesus is the best example to us. He was very open about his work. He went to the synagogue and proclaimed his mission to the world.'

'Christians mustn't be any different. They must be brave and willing to make a stand against the prevailing spirit of this age.'

Where did Alton stand on proportional representation? 'Small parties will particularly benefit from it. It would also affect the two-parties-within-the-party situation. That way, two diverging factions within each party could be fairly represented. So I support it.'

Why should Christians vote for the Liberal Democrats? 'People shouldn't vote for parties – but vote for a candidate to represent them. They should know the position held by the candidate regarding relevant issues – for example, abortion, immigration, law and social security matters.'

'While the overall party position is important, Christians should know the candidate's position on individual matters.'



Michael Apichella is an Oxford-based journalist and media consultant. His latest book *Prison Pentecost* (Kingsway) investigates the alleged revival underway in Britain's prisons.

*'I do think Christians should speak about their faith publicly. You cannot privatise your faith and opt out of the world.'*

DAVID ALTON



# Heart of the matter

**R**ELATIONSHIPS have a major part to play in transforming British society. That's the view of Christian researchers and campaigners who make up the Jubilee Centre.

At the core of the centre's thinking is the importance of good relationships, not just in families where the need is obvious but in all walks of life - in business, schools, hospitals, elderly peoples' homes and prisons to name but a few.

'Our focus is the Bible,' explains Director, Dr Michael Schluter. 'We believe there is a biblical pattern for society and our aim is to study it (that is the research side of our work), disseminate it (so that others can take up the ideas) and apply it to specific issues (through practical initiatives and campaigns such as Keep Sunday Special).'

'Having applied biblical social teaching to many different issues over the years, we saw common themes consistently emerging from the research. We found in the Bible an overwhelming concern for the protection and nurturing of human relationships at all levels of society, whereas current public

policy was seen to focus too narrowly on economic concerns.'

The next logical step was to set up a subsidiary organisation, The Relationships Foundation, as a way of expressing biblical values in our contemporary secular culture.

'Matters such as community, family, social stability and secure moral direction are of great importance to the lives of ordinary people. And yet political thought has been prone to neglect those down-to-earth realities of our daily lives,' said Schluter.

'We want to see public policy debated and changed in a way that balances the need of economics and of relationships.'

Schluter points out that cannot be done outright. But his belief is that 'in 20 years from now,

if the Jubilee Centre is allowed to grow and flourish, there will be a body of thinking and support around relational ideas that will provide an immensely powerful platform on which British society, and hopefully other societies as well, can be transformed.'



*Michael Schluter*



# l e t t e r s

## W E L O V E I T

I would like to say that the 'Sex' issue of Compass was absolutely excellent.

As a counsellor, working within New Generation Church, and also outside, I have found the articles really useful for clients.

*Maddy Carvasso, Sidcup, Kent*

The last issue of Compass about Work was stimulating and challenging. However, the emphasis of the articles reflected the fact they were mainly written by church leaders and those in church-related work.

We were exalted not to 'sell ourselves as slaves to work or money' and not to consider 'a word on the job' as a reasonable approach. There was little mention of people who wish to witness through their work, see work as integral to their vocation and find the Church interfaces very poorly to the world of work.

Church often requires commitment to endless meetings — meaning little time for those you work with and know well. More emphasis on 'church in work' and how we can make Church more inclusive of our nine-to-five activities would be very useful.

I feel that Compass plays an important role in debating difficult and provocative issues. The above is in no way to demean the excellent job you are all doing — only to add to the debate.

*Paul Lambert, Weybridge, Surrey*

Yes, the balance needs to be addressed between the so-called 'full-time' Christian workers, and full-time Christians in so-called 'secular' work. I sometimes wonder if modern pundits would have advised Saul of Tarsus to stay in the Sanhedrin, as the influence he could

have there would be powerful for the Church!

Some Christian professionals/workers are called by God to be in their workplaces. It's their vocation. Others are not called to be there, and need to leave.

Some 'full-time' Christian workers are called to take that role. Others are not, it isn't their vocation, and only God knows why they stay!

I agree with Tom Sine — we need to be called, we need a vocation.

*Adrian Hawkes, North London*

I have recently read the edition of Compass on Work, and as usual found the articles to be of a consistently high standard — those by Norman Barnes, Tom Sine and Martin Scott particularly stand out.

However, it would have been helpful to have included articles which address some of the issues affecting people working in a non-professional environment. Those employed on a building site, in a factory, or as office cleaners come up against different pressures and choices.

Covering a broader range of work experiences would enable more people to identify with the article and give others a broader understanding of the issues faced in different environments.

Keep tackling 'difficult' issues!

*Simon Blanchflower, London W11*

## W E C A N ' T S E E I T

Congratulations on another very relevant issue of Compass (Vol 1 No 4). The content is indeed excellent. The presentation in colour and graphics is attractive.

I have just one plea on behalf of all readers

whose eyesight is not quite as good as it used to be, and all those compelled to wear glasses to read. Please can you consider contrast when over-printing on coloured backgrounds?

On page 13 there is a very good example of a panel of bold black on pink background which really stands out. I struggled with page 27 where a lighter font is printed on a blue brickwork background — despite using a 300 watt spot lamp. Not even Belshazzar had this trouble reading the writing on the wall! Perhaps I should be looking for a prophet to interpret.

As for 'The man with X-ray eyes' on page 19, I gave up and vowed to try again only when the sun came out (a rare event in Surrey this March). Surely if you want it read, there is no point in making Compass a major optical challenge?

*Tony Barker, Redhill, Surrey*

*Sorry, it was an unintended production error. It won't happen again. — Ed*

## FAITH OUTRAGED?

Reading the article 'Faith out working' in the latest issue of Compass I could hardly fail to be flattered by the approach (if not the photograph) but the phrase 'gross misrepresentation' did spring to my mind (and the lips of the first person I showed it to). I'm afraid that the printed outcome of the interview did not reflect my views on 'Christianity and the workplace'.

It led off stating that I have attempted to establish a business on Christian principles, whereas what I had told the interviewer was that this was exactly what I had decided NOT to do! I did not, and do not, want to own, run

The Editor would be pleased to receive contributions to future issues of Compass. Future themes include revival, peacemakers, community and culture. Articles, poetry or illustrations should be discussed in advance. Please send a brief synopsis in the first instance. Paul Dakin, Compass, Pioneer Direct Ltd, PO Box 39, Sunbury-on-Thames, Middx TW16 6PP  
How does your church use Compass? We would be interested to hear from you



or be associated with 'Christian business' since for me 'Christian business' has (with woefully rare exceptions) long been associated with poor quality, aspirations to mediocrity in place of excellence, and outrageous excuses for treating people badly.

What I have tried to do is build God's kingdom by doing what the scriptures urge: to hear God and do what he says, which is a very different proposition.

The article goes on to get more specific. "Distributing tracts is not allowed" he says. Not so. This question had indeed never arisen until the interviewer raised it. I hope that people are treated as people — not non-people, non-Christians or non-anything-at-all — much less evangelism fodder.

Needless to say the concept of 'churched' and 'un-churched' never enters into our thinking, much less our policy making... I do believe that God wants to use businesses, led by Christians, with prophetic insight and direction to powerfully impact our nation and culture, as a key part of the 'new genetic code'.

Barry E James, Sheffield

## STAND UP & BE COUNTED

Politics is the art of the possible - God is the author of the impossible! Therefore those two worldviews will always collide. Rather than disengage from the political world, we need to re-engage with it by carrying with us the truth that God gives, and the hope he provides for the possible to be transformed through the life and ministry of his people.

Our world needs to be different, and if we are to truly act as 'salt and light' then we must be active in the political arena. Let us all pray for those who seek to serve God in politics, and also take the opportunities that we are given through our communities and national involvement that God alone can provide.

In the 19th century evangelical Christians saw slavery abolished, the hours and conditions of work for women and children transformed, employment exchanges introduced, orphanages and leper colonies built and staffed. We can, and must do it again!

Clive Calver, Evangelical Alliance

What they say about...

## POLITICS

*'Practical politics consists of ignoring facts.'*

HENRY BROOKS ADAMS

*'Politics is supposed to be the second oldest profession. I have come to realise that it bears a very close resemblance to the first.'*

RONALD REAGAN

*'Politics is not the art of the possible. It consists of choosing between the disastrous and the unpalatable.'*

J K GALBRAITH

What they say about...

## GOVERNMENT

*'The object of government in peace and in war is not the glory of rulers or of races, but the happiness of the common man.'*

WILLIAM HENRY BEVERIDGE

*'The best government is that which governs least.'*

JOHN L O'SULLIVAN

*'I would not give half a guinea to live under one form of government rather than another. It is of no moment to the happiness of an individual.'*

SAMUEL JOHNSON

*'I work for a Government I despise for ends I think criminal.'*

JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES

What they say about...

## POLITICIANS

*'Politics are too serious a matter to be left to the politicians.'*

CHARLES DE GAULLE

*'He knows nothing; and he thinks he knows everything. That points clearly to a political career.'*

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

*'Politics is perhaps the only profession for which no preparation is thought necessary.'*

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

What they say about...

## THE WORLD

*'There is no history of mankind, there are only many histories of all kinds of aspects of human life. And one of these is the history of political power. This is elevated into the history of the world.'*

SIR KARL POPPER

*'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.'*

KARL MARX

*'It is exciting to have a real crisis on your hands, when you have spent half your political life dealing with humdrum issues like the environment.'*

MARGARET THATCHER

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# Season and illum

*There is no clear scriptural statement that Christians should be involved in politics. But many people in the Bible were politically active.  
MP Simon Hughes presents the case*

**T**HERE are no 'no-go' areas in God's world. If it's right for Christians to be working in tax offices, armies, sports clubs or engineering firms, it can't be wrong for Christians to be involved in politics.

There are a huge number of biblical teachings which make clear that we do not just have a personal responsibility but a collective one. The gospel infers that everyone is our 'brother' and 'sister'. The community as well as the individual has a joint responsibility for all members of this expanded 'family'.

The New Testament states that we are given different gifts and expected to exercise them. Christ came to bring about

the Kingdom of God, and we are called to advance this same Kingdom here on earth and as soon as possible.

We are called to implement God's will in justice –

Mary's song refers to raising up the humble and bringing down the mighty. We are reminded in Matthew's gospel that

whatever we do for other people we do for God. Scripture instructs us to be salt and light in the world. We are given charge of the fish, the birds, the animals, and all living creatures, large and small. Christ himself said that those who are to be great among us should, if given this responsibility, simultaneously be servants. We are enjoined to respond when God calls us: 'Here am I. Send me'.

The implication of much that Jesus said directly and indirectly, implies that public life, secular leadership, and involvement in the decision-making processes are rightful occupations for Christians.

If we believe in stewardship, responsibility to our globe, our family, and our fellow human beings, then it is crucial that we participate in





# inate

the political processes which determine the future.

If everyone is equally valuable in the sight of God, then ensuring that societies have a system of welfare and mutual security is something that is of prime importance.

If humans are naturally selfish, and naturally tempted to exploit their own strengths and the weaknesses of others, then we should be always active in correcting the injustices caused by that selfishness.

Some of the injustices are structural and not personal. Some of the injustices may come from the tax rates and the welfare benefits set by Government and fixed by public servants.

Upholding good and countering evil may mean difficult decisions as to how we respond to invading tyrants such as Saddam Hussein. To renounce responsibility for being part of such a difficult decision-making process, would be an extraordinary abdication of duty. It could certainly not be justified either by the risk of making a wrong decision, or that there would be disagreement about the aims.

If an individual believes that going into politics is a proper Christian

calling, that doesn't exclude the right of others to be involved who have another faith or none at all. Nor does it mean that we can arrogantly assume our perspective is the best. We can't take it for granted that we will necessarily be wiser than the next man or woman. There is an even greater reason why politics and government are rightful areas for Christian attention and activity.

*'Caesar sought to change men by changing laws and institutions: Jesus changed laws and institutions by changing men.'*

WILL DURANT

Governments and politicians help to lead society in establishing its value systems, ethics, standards and principles.

Christians and people of faith, have a specific contribution to bring to the political process. We have values which are about the long-term, which put the worth of the full development of the individual above materialistic acquisitions.

It is that sense of perspective – the need to enable the triumph of good over evil. It is that duty – to do what is right, to lead, to challenge, and to change things – which above all is the Christian imperative.

We are called not to conform to this world, but to transform it. While we recognise that the ultimate transformation is that of the individual life by the power of God – the transformation of our world can be hugely affected by the leadership of such individuals inspired by God. Justice and righteousness can be

brought to our village, our town, our city, and our land.

Politicians may not be popular characters. We get brickbats as often as bouquets. But no Christian was called to have an easy life. Where the challenges are greatest and the problems seem intractable – there is the place to humbly but boldly go.

We must remember not to trust in our own strengths, but in the inspiration, correction and guidance from God. He knows and understands all, and can make even our fallibility contribute to bringing about a better world.



*Simon Hughes is Member of Parliament for Southwark and Bermondsey. He is Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Health and Urban Affairs. He was the youngest Opposition MP when he was first elected in 1983. He has an unbeaten record for the highest swing between two parties in any British parliamentary election. Simon has been a member of the General Synod of the Church of England, and attends St James' Church, Bermondsey. He is a member of the All-Party Christian Fellowship.*







# Apocalypse on your d

*A world in pain is on your TV. But you can help make some political changes. Mike Morris explains how...*

**Y**ou live in a global village. The realities endured by other nations and tribes are graphically portrayed on your TV screen.

Sometimes you'll see a British Government representative visiting senior politicians in another country. Yet our 'global village' is consumed with far greater problems than our own small islands.

There are increasing numbers of people living on the planet:

- in 1825 the earth supported one billion people;
- in the next century that doubled to two billion;
- the next 50 years saw it double again to four billion;
- the 20 years from 1975-95 saw it expand to 5.3 billion;
- the United Nations project a world population of 8-12 billion in 2025.

Most of that growth is in so-called 'developing' countries (95 per cent of global population growth will take place there between 1995-2025).

AIDS provides an unknown random factor in that equation - World Health Organisation estimates say around 90 per cent of all AIDS cases are in 'developing' countries.

The majority of that increasing population is moving to cities or is born in an urban environment. In 1985 around 32 per cent of the population in the 'developing' world lived in cities - by 2000 it'll be 40 per cent.

That has a serious impact on God's planet. The impact of urban populations is catastrophic to the world's resources:

- Aligarh city, India, imports 1,000 tonnes of soil daily for use in construction, affecting natural drainage and increasing flooding in the region;
- Mexico City grew from one to 15 million people in 50 years, and has sunk more than 20 feet over the last century because it's drawn so much water from the aquifer beneath;
- London churns out over 15 million tons of waste and 7.5 million tons of sewage sludge annually, and emits 60 million tonnes of carbon dioxide.

Urban environments are increasingly unhealthy. Infant mortality rates in Bangladesh city slums are 50 per cent higher than in the deprived countryside; in Manila three times higher with tuberculosis nine times more common.

The UN estimate nearly 250 million urban dwellers cannot get safe drinking water. By 2000 AD most third world children will be born in absolute poverty. Worldwide, 100 million homeless 'street children' struggle for survival.

Jubilee Campaign work with children in such circumstances. A current programme of theirs is to deliver young girls in Bombay, India, from being forced into prostitution.

Asha grew up in a squalid room where her mother serviced between 10-25 customers a day. When her mother died, the brothel owners moved another woman in, forcing Asha and her young brother onto the street.

Now she's 14. Her father wants to sell her to a local brothel for £6,000 - equivalent to four years salary for him, a local taxi driver. Asha attends church regularly but is in constant danger. It's estimated more than one million



# Firststep

women and children work in the brothels of India.

Jubilee want to buy a house costing a mere £20,000 as a refuge for Asha and girls like her. A Christian organisation tackling political realities, Jubilee is a British-based response to world evils. It's one way we can involve ourselves in international politics.

'That's their problem - not ours,' we may say. But the effects come back to haunt us. The impact of our consumer-led lifestyles has significant impact.

In Mexico City 25 per cent of all babies are born with enough lead in their blood to permanently damage their brains and physical development - a by-product of the convenience of the motor car.

Yet men in Bangladesh, the world's 12th poorest nation, have a greater chance of living until 65 than do those in Harlem, New York, part of one of the world's richest societies.

All is not bleak. We're all beneficiaries of the Gospel of grace. However, we'll have to live entirely oriented by that Gospel message to make a difference.

Real political power is in the hands of the people.

Politicians are subject to many factors which can mitigate against justice. The Gulf conflict saw Britain allied with one of the world's most brutal regimes - Saudi Arabia - who'd sponsored Islamic terrorism and were avowedly anti-Christian. Yet Iraq under Saddam Hussein hadn't overtly persecuted the Church.

Malaysia - which is pursuing a programme of Islamicisation - benefited from monies advanced by

the British Government for building the Pergau dam.

What was worse was that those monies were from the Overseas Aid budget - yet linked illegally with an arms deal.

This isn't new. In 1750 the peoples of Britain and India enjoyed roughly the same per capita levels of industrialisation. But Britain's East India

Company exported to India cheaper, better quality machine textiles - destroying domestic producers.

In 1814 India imported one million yards of cotton fabric; by 1830 it was 51 million; and by 1879 995 million. By 1900 India had one-one hundredth of the per capita level of industrialisation compared with Britain. Consequences of trade-led injustice are with us today.

We must determine our objectives

## R.E.A.D.Y. for action

**R**EAD suitable journals such as 'Economist', 'New Internationalist', daily press; books like Tom Sine's 'Wild Hope'; contact Jubilee Campaign, TEAR Fund, LINKS, Christian Aid, CRED, World Development Movement.

**E**VALUATE - weigh up the pros and cons of the various positions; engage in theological reflection; what are the merits of particular special interest groups?

**A**RTICULATE an argument for international involvement; write it up, communicate it across the church, into school and college groups, into the union you belong to.

**D**EMAND action - through letter-writing (Jubilee have a churches pack with guidelines on effective letter writing), visiting MPs and MEPs to represent your position.

**Y**OU can make a difference - believe in your contribution, motivate and mobilise others. If you don't, no-one else will. You are a major resource for change!

within God's world. Success stories from around the globe emerge where local people in local situations take responsibility for their own destiny.

In Orangi, Karachi's largest slum, residents organised themselves into groups of 20 to 40 families, installed sewage disposal, provided simple health care, and brought down infant mortality four-fold in nine years.

TEAR Fund, LINKS International and Christian Aid could tell similar stories. In our own church we've launched Christian Relief, Education and Development (CRED), which engages us in development education and fair trade projects.

We can engage with macro issues at an effective micro level. Try it and see. You can make a mark on your global village.



*Mike Morris worked with British Youth for Christ in strategic planning for eight years, and the Evangelical Alliance for ten years as International Director, then as Policy Director. Married to Katie, he enjoys cricket, ornithology and reading, and is part of Revelation Church in Chichester*



# BRITAIN'S POLITICAL

## PRAYER

The Bible says, 'Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities...' We are called to pray for those in authority - this guide will help you to do that more systematically.

## LOBBYING

Lobbying means to try and influence members of a law-making assembly and get them to act on your views. Constituents can lobby their MP by writing him a letter, visiting him in person at his constituency surgery or at the Palace of Westminster. Alternatively you can get your MP to table an EDM. Early Day Motions are an expression of opinion on any subject. Talk to your MP if you wish him or her to initiate or sign an EDM. If you want to know who your MP is, ring the Public Information Office on 0171 219 4272.

Lobbying can also be done by hired consultants and organised voluntary or professional groups. If you are interested in lobbying, why not organise a petition which can be presented in either House by an MP or peer - or get your MP to ask a parliamentary question. Those can be put either verbally or in writing to members of the Government on any question.

## ELECTIONS

With a general election coming in the next year, the parties are gearing up for the contest - raising money, selecting candidates and trying to win the media war. At a constituency level each of the parties are taking steps to win over your support. Now is a good time to make your views known.

## THE LEGISLATURE

Legislation usually originates from the Government. However, a ballot is held every year and the top six MPs have the best chance to initiate legislation of their choosing. Peers can also initiate legislation. So Bills can originate in either House and proceedings continue in the House from which it started before being passed to the other House, before going to the Queen for Royal Assent.

## THE

The political party with the largest number of MPs is most likely to form the Government. The party with 326 MPs, creates either a 'hung' Parliament (with the Party that makes the Government) or the Labour Government.

## THE P

Leader of the party which forms the Government and fulfils the role of Prime Minister. Legislation comes before Parliament; overseeing the Civil Service.

## T

The country's top executive committee, with about 22 members. They are also 50-60 junior ministers within the Government.

## THE PASSAGE OF A

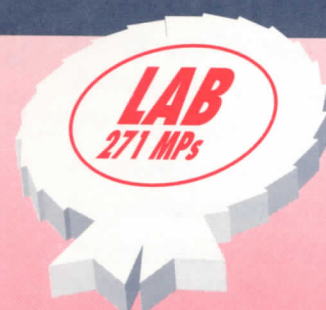
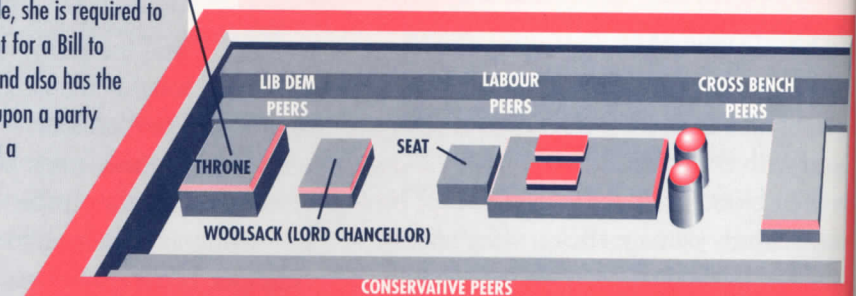


## THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Composed of over 1200 peers. There are about 800 hereditary peers, more than 400 life peers, 24 bishops, 2 Archbishops and 19 Law Lords, one of whom is the Lord Chancellor. The power of the Lords is limited to initiating and modifying legislation.

## THE MONARCH

Although having an important ceremonial role, she is required to give her assent for a Bill to become Law and also has the power to call upon a party leader to form a government.



## POL

A great many seats in Parliament never change hands as the same party wins over and over again. As a result, local party



# SYSTEM EXPLAINED

## GOVERNMENT

Government. It needs to have 326 or more MPs for an absolute majority. Fewer than this means an alliance with another party securing the necessary majority to form the Government or a minority Government.

## PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister. He or she is responsible for leading the Government; deciding what the Government does; and maintaining national security.

## CABINET

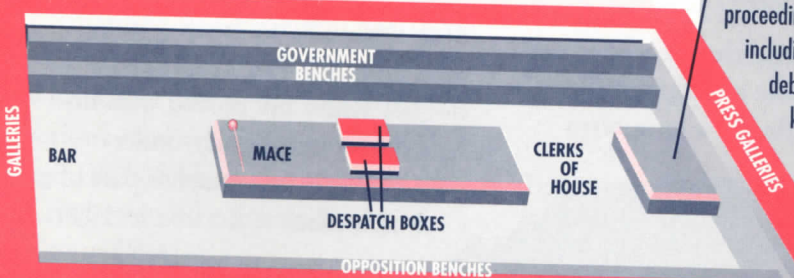
Important people in Government and each has a particular responsibility. There are 22 in the Cabinet with a specific responsibility within a Department of State.

## LEGISLATION THROUGH PARLIAMENT



## THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

The UK is divided into 651 constituencies. Each constituency elects a representative called a Member of Parliament (MP). The chamber of the House is split between Government and Opposition benches which face each other, and is where proposed legislation is debated, oral questions answered and statements are made by the Government.



## THE SPEAKER

Oversees and controls the proceedings of the House, including who speaks in the debates. She attempts to keep MPs in 'order' and although the Speaker is an MP, they are traditionally above party politics.



## PARTIES

Parties. To elect the candidate effectively choose the MP. So, being a party member, you can have a greater say in who sits in Parliament.

## THE CIVIL SERVICE

Made up of administrators, policy technicians, experts and secretaries, who work with Cabinet ministers and junior ministers, to put Government policy into practice.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Billions of pounds a year are spent by local government to provide a range of services.

### Metropolitan Councils

Cover city and London Boroughs with responsibility for roads, social services and education.

### County Councils

Administer similar areas of responsibility to the Metropolitan Boroughs but within a county boundary

### District Councils

(including rural boroughs)

Cover smaller localities and towns with responsibility for refuse and planning applications etc.

### Council Officers

As councils become more open to the public, officers on the end of the phone can be a useful source of information. If you are persistent, they can tell you how best to influence a decision.

### Councillors

More and more MPs began politics in local government and it's seen as a good way of 'learning the political ropes'. Despite huge budgets and opportunities to decide local priorities, the parties are finding it harder to find candidates. The first step to becoming a councillor is joining a political party. Sadly, there are few independents elected in local government these days

Andrea MacPherson has been Chairman of the Young Christian Democrats for the last three years. Having studied for a Communications and Politics degree, she is currently working as PR Executive for Reed Business Publishing. Andrea is a member of Chessington Community Church.





# How to be a local hero

*God's kingdom is being declared through political activism - Chris Seaton believes it starts at home*

**P**OLITICS is a hazardous business. You run the risk of being accused of dishonesty and of having ulterior motives.

'The politician is an acrobat,' said the wit Maurice Barres. 'He keeps his balance by saying the opposite of what he does.'

For the Christian, that risk is heightened by the response of a Church which separates its spiritual activities from the messy political world. Yet believers are being challenged about political involvement.

Alongside the famous names like David Alton, Frank Field and Gary Streeter, are unsung thousands who devote their lives to local politics.

It's a common myth that influence is most effectively exercised 'at the top' - for Christianity has always been a grassroots faith. Problems have emerged when rulers have sought to 'christianise' society from the top down - the most important example being the fourth

century Roman emperor Constantine.

Today Britons feel increasingly marginalised by central government and the democratic process. That's seen in the growth of 'DIY politics' like the Twyford and Newbury road protests and in declining turn-outs at the polls.

So what of those Christians working at the coal-face of community action? Compass spoke to some of them.

## **PARTY WORKER**

Liza Cooke represented the Liberal Democrats on Chichester City Council until 1995.

With a childhood dream of 'wanting to make a difference for God', she developed a long-term

interest in politics.

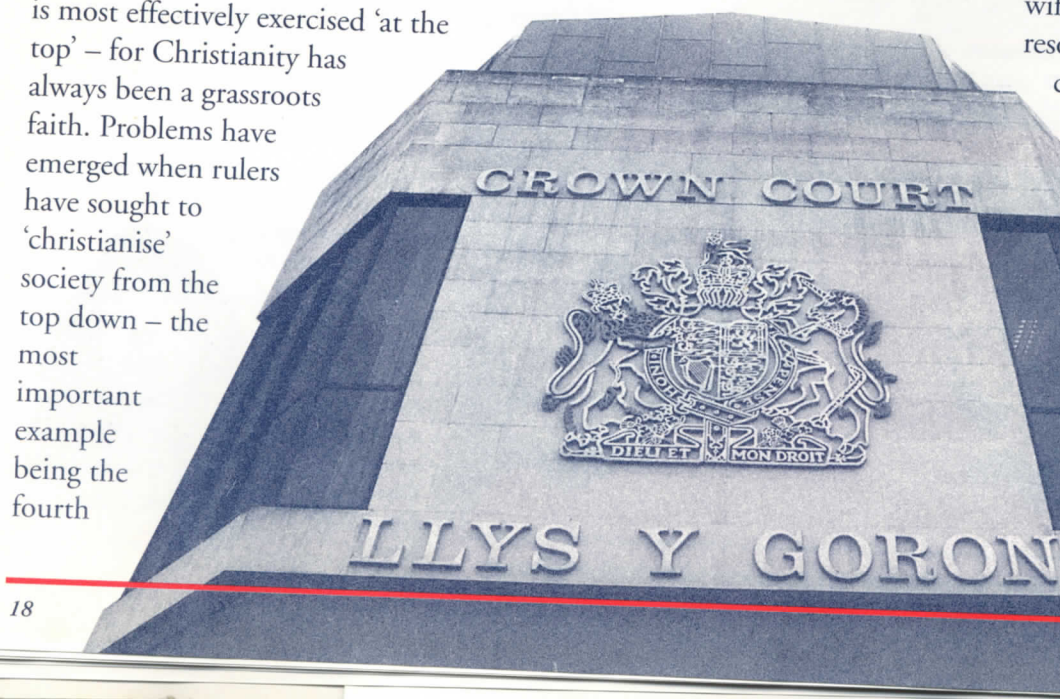
When Cooke and husband Graham were canvassed by a local Lib-Dem party worker, they took the opportunity to 'give him the gospel!' However, they also felt God stirring them to become involved in political work.

They decided to join the Liberal Democrats and became party workers. Cooke was approached to stand as a councillor. 'The thing I do best is influence people,' she said. 'Being a councillor has enabled me to have a positive influence for God.'

## **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR**

Alan Frith, 25, has been working with Pioneer's TIE Teams in Bognor Regis. He moved with his wife onto a notoriously under-resourced housing estate as part of a church-plant at Bersted in 1991.

Frith started campaigning for a community centre there, and was invited to stand as a councillor on Bersted Parish Council. He was voted in as an Independent - the second youngest councillor







PHOTOS - ZINO PECE

*He's the Governor... Julian Richards with a class at Gwyrosydd Junior School, Swansea*

ever elected in Arun District. 'At one level I have no interest in political power,' he admitted. 'I even flunked out of politics at college! My heart is to show people the love of Jesus by serving them through the Council.'

### LOCAL LOBBYIST

Jess Loseby became a Christian as a performing arts student at age 16. Within a year she'd become a wheelchair user as the result of a serious road-traffic accident. By age 18, Loseby was secretary of the Chichester Wheelchair Access Group (WAG).

'My reasons for being involved were first of all selfish. I couldn't get into buildings without a lift-up or cross the road without a bump!' she said. 'But as a Christian wheelchair

user, I felt I had a duty to be a voice for those who have none.'

Loseby's lobbying has produced results. Over 200 extra dropped curbs are in place annually as a result of WAG's campaigning. Access to historic buildings has been secured – partly involving a four-year battle which twice visited the desk of Michael Heseltine, then Secretary of State for the Environment.

### SCHOOL GOVERNOR

Trained as a teacher, David Thatcher leads Arun Community Church. He was approached 12 years ago to be a governor of two primary schools in Rustington.

Such involvement can be rewarding, he believes. 'Education legislation gives governors a great deal of power. There's a considerable range of responsibilities from appointing staff to setting the school ethos.'



### Action for activists

- don't be afraid to join a political party - but none of them have got it all right! You don't necessarily have to belong to a party to stand for election.
- can you spare the time?
- are you a parent? What about becoming a parent governor?
- if you're interested in standing for a council seat, contact the local clerk of the council. Their phone number will be in the book.
- do you read your local paper?
- do you know the local issues?

But the role must be taken seriously, he added. 'To do the job properly, you need to be in the school regularly. Sometimes it's hard to know if all the time is worth it, but it does help to put a caring and known face to our church.'

Politics has a tarnished image. But with a God-given mandate to transform our communities, can we ignore direct involvement? Charles De Gaulle said '...politics are too serious a matter to be left to the politician'. I'm sure you'll agree. 

*Chris Seaton lives in Bognor Regis with his wife, Charlotte, and their two children. He is on the oversight team of Revelation Church and is a regular speaker at events such as Spring Harvest.*







# EQUIPPING FOR LIFE

Since the mid 1980's, TIE (Training In Evangelism) Teams have trained hundreds of people of various ages & backgrounds. In the context of reaching out to others & extending God's kingdom, individuals are trained, equipped & helped to develop in every area of their christian life - in both gifting & character. Some individuals have gone on to serve churches in a full-time capacity, others have returned to make a difference in their places of work.

## Short Term Teams.

Are you committed to growth & evangelism? Can you give two weeks or longer in July or August? If the answer is 'YES', then Short Term Teams may be the answer! Each two week programme starts with 5 days of in-depth training & team building at various centres around the country. Teams then go & assist in the running of a wide range of evangelistic & church planting projects working alongside gifted leaders.

Minimum age 16yrs.

## Long Term Teams.

Operating from regional centres around the country, Long Term Teams balance a full programme of intensive study with practical experience. Seconded to local churches, team members work as part of church planting teams, or in more established growing churches. Opportunities are also developed taking special missions both in the UK & in mainland Europe. If you're willing to learn, to function as part of a team & to work hard, this could be for you.

Minimum age 18yrs.

With the refining of curriculum, placement opportunities, communications and specialisation within the programme, TIE Teams is in a key position, with strong foundations, to respond to the new things God is doing now, getting in place for the future.

## 14-16's Summer Teams.

If you're aged between 14 & 16, looking for a challenge this summer & want to have the opportunity to be involved in evangelism, to be trained & then to have a go, TIE Teams has just the thing for you. A week packed full of action, fun, training & opportunities as you learn to communicate your friendship with God in a way that is relevant. You will be able to work alongside experienced evangelists who will help & encourage you whilst working in teams with workshops, practical evangelism, drama, music & social action.

For every group of five or more, we would like youth leaders to accompany the group.

**IF YOU HAVE A VISION FOR YOUR FUTURE,  
IT NEEDN'T STAY A DREAM.**

If you would like further information, please contact: Pioneer TIE Teams, PO Box 79c, Esher, Surrey. KT10 9LP or ring 01932 789681

"TIE Teams offer... a genuine opportunity for training which helps to build & develop local church. I warmly encourage you to make use of TIE Teams."

Clive Calver,  
Evangelical Alliance

"TIE Teams students are given high quality training by practitioners, theologians & senior national ministries. This initiative has already given birth to a range of evangelistic ministries, impacting the UK & other nations. TIE Teams are one of Pioneer's success stories & I commend them to you.

Gerald Coates,  
Pioneer Team Leader

"TIE Teams is for absolutely everybody - not just college leavers. As a 34 year old ex-career woman, I would recommend TIE Teams to other older professionals. It is well worth taking a year out of the rat race!"

Val Robinson, P.A.

"TIE Teams stretched me to be able to cope with working long hours with less time off than I was used to and has equipped me to have confidence in an environment quickly and the ability to just slot in"

Jo Moores, Project Worker for  
Health Day Centre

**PIONEER**





# Holy alliance

BY KEITH EWING

**W**ITH REPUBLICAN rallies sometimes resembling Southern Baptist revival meetings, news that Clive Calver of the Evangelical Alliance UK met for private talks with Prime Minister John Major was bound to stir a reaction.

Letters were not long in coming. Genuine concern was voiced that the Alliance, which represents through its membership over a million people, would be seen as supporting only the Tories; concern, too, that evangelicals were involved at all in the 'dirty business' of politics.

So what business has the Evangelical Alliance in the corridors of political power? And what is it seeking to achieve on behalf of its members?

Clive's meeting with John Major was hefty recognition of the growing unity and visibility of evangelicals. Over 40 per cent of protestants in church on Sunday are evangelical – and so are half the new vicars starting work in the Church of England. It makes sense for politicians to be aware of such a force. Never mind the fact that, when it comes to numbers, Spring Harvest makes the party conference season seem like small beer.

But rather than any one political ideology the Alliance takes its inspiration from the Bible and uses

as its model the 19th century Christians who had no doubt of their calling to be involved in society. Wilberforce, Shaftesbury and many others persuasively expressed Christian values in Parliament and national debate. They did not eliminate evil from society but they did help to stop the slave trade and abolish slavery in the British Empire. They did fight for better care for orphans and street children, and introduce elementary education and battle against child prostitution.

States Martyn Eden, Public Affairs Director of the Alliance, who spends much of his time working alongside MPs of all parties: 'It is impossible to be neutral about politics. If we do nothing we are voting for the status quo and I do not believe that is a Christian option even if you do support the present government. There are many issues on which we need to press a Christian perspective.'

He continues: 'As citizens of both God's Kingdom and Britain, we do have responsibilities in the political realm. There are various levels of involvement. The Alliance can contribute through challenging the nation when it departs from God's values, encouraging regular prayer and intercession for Parliament and working for united political action among members on issues where the Bible gives us a clear mandate.'

Meetings with the Prime Minister may grab headlines but much of the Alliance's political work is behind the scenes. When a crisis in funding for drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres reared its head as part of the Government's Community Care proposals, the Alliance led a delegation of members to the Minister of Health. That led to new guidance to local authorities and the establishing of a monitoring process. Other direct action which the Alliance has taken with its members includes:

- working with David Alton MP to secure two amendments, designed to protect children, to the 1984 Video Recording Act. These remain the only statutory criteria which the British Board of Film Classification are obliged to consider when certifying videos for general release;
- being requested by Government to make recommendations on the Code of Practice relating to the Disability Discrimination Act. During a House of Lords debate the Alliance's brief was commended and used by several peers.

Politics is certainly not the answer to everything. But it is an important strand of life in which to be faithful to Jesus as Lord. Martyn Eden believes that the opting out of political involvement by past generations of Christians has heightened today's deep penetration of secularism into our culture. 'The challenge,' says Martyn, 'is to reverse that trend so that God is once again honoured at the heart of the nation.'





# Channel crossing

*People are finding faith across our dark continent.  
Euro veteran Sir Fred Catherwood urges the little islanders to join them...*

**A** STOUT LADY IN the corner said the Channel Tunnel was 'the rape of England'. I said it was just a cure for seasickness - but she wouldn't have it. She's not alone in her nationalism.

On the doorsteps you hear a rising tide of prejudice against foreigners. The French may have been on our side for the last three European wars, but nationalists see them as our 'natural enemies' and want to go back 200 years to fight Napoleon all over again.

We need a practical debate on the possible benefit to us all of a

**'We should see Europe's freedom of religion, of speech and of residence in each other's countries as a tremendous opportunity - and not as a threat'**

currency which could hold its value instead of one which has lost over nine-tenths of its purchasing power since it first bore the Queen's head.

But all we hear is fierce nationalist rhetoric about loss of Parliament's sovereignty. If Parliament, rather than speculators, really have sovereignty,

why did they not stop the worst inflation in the whole of British history? In currency as in defence, in trade and the environment, we have to work together and not bind ourselves up to distrust and suspicion.

When asked to quote the first commandment, Christ added to love for God, love for our neighbour. He illustrated that second commandment with the parable of the Good Samaritan.

The Jews and the Samaritans had an argument as to who was entitled to the land and the Jews thought the Samaritans were heretics. But, on the road to Jericho, the injured Jew was ignored by his own countrymen and rescued by a despised Samaritan.

So, Christ taught, the Samaritans were the neighbours of the Jews and they should love them. And, today, we should love our neighbours too - the French, the Dutch, the Belgians, the Germans, the Danes, the Irish - and others in the European Union.

We must look after our own interests too. But the best way to defend our interests is to link

them, in solidarity, with the similar interests of our neighbours, to exercise together the power which none of us has separately. So we have to find ways to accommodate each other's vital interests. In my 15 years in the European Parliament that was no problem - for our interests were close and our





differences marginal.

More important, the EC has spread freedom to its neighbours. When my wife and I went to Spain on our honeymoon, Protestants were not allowed to advertise their meetings in public and the country - like Portugal beside it - was a dictatorship with neither freedom of speech nor of worship.

To join the European Community, both countries had to recognise the dignity of the individual and grant freedom of speech and of worship. Protestant churches now flourish in both countries.

Ten years ago I went to Greece to try to persuade the Archbishop of Athens and the Greek Justice minister that it was against their professed freedom of worship to

sentence three Protestants for 'proselytising'. They were all released on appeal.

Further east, I visited Turkey to try to help the Protestant churches. The Justice Minister told me, 'We had never heard about Protestants. But if half Europe is Protestant, we will have to look after you!' So we came to an agreement on practical ways of making sure that Turkey's secular constitution could not be subverted at local level by police raids on churches.

We should see Europe's freedom of religion, of speech and of residence in each other's countries as a tremendous opportunity - and not as a threat.

Had the Apostle Paul felt as defensive as some of us, he would never have crossed over to Macedonia and spread the gospel in Europe.

At Brussels, the centre of the European Union, evangelical Christians like CARE for Europe and others have an Evangelical Centre and are active in lobbying for Christian input into policy decisions. Their presence is welcome in the European Parliament, where David Hallam, member for Herefordshire, has taken over from me as Chair of the Prayer Breakfast.

I didn't find the Catholic church the all-powerful political influence which Protestants used to fear. Everywhere, Catholic colleagues reported, its congregations were ageing, unable to keep their young people. The main enemy of the faith today is secular humanism and, in combatting its advance,

Catholic colleagues were always at our side.

In the Prayer Breakfast, the most spiritual and theologically sound input came from an Italian

Communist,

Signora

Cincinari

Rodano. Don't

ask me how, for

the moment, she

reconciled that

with either her

communism or

her creed; her faith was real and

living. And today many more

from 'dead' churches are finding that living faith.

There have been times and places, as there will be again, where anti-Christian state links with anti-Christian church to oppress Christian people. But nothing can resist God's kingdom, those whom Jesus has called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world - and from all the world; for the saints in heaven will be 'from every tribe, language, people and nation'.



*Sir Fred Catherwood was a member of the European Parliament, and its Vice-President until 1992. Having been Managing Director of such companies as British Aluminium, Goodyear and John Laing Ltd he was well equipped to be Director General of the National Economic Development Council, and Chairman of the British Institute of Management. Sir Fred was President of Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, and is current President of Evangelical Alliance.*



ILLUSTRATION - SARAH PAINE





# r e v

C O M P I L E D B Y S U E R I N A L D

## THE CELTIC EXPLOSION

**T**'I'm going back to my roots.....' a familiar cry that seems more relevant than ever! Music reflects society (or does society reflect the music?) and presently the Christian and mainstream markets are flooded with releases searching and exploring roots of spiritual and biological inheritance. We have encountered the native American music, we have been educated with the Gregorian chants but currently we are saturated with Celtic offerings.

*Riverdance* is an obvious example — the whole musical and visual experience is beautiful, energetic, profound, inspiring and amplifies the cry of people groups aching to find their origins. The musical score is quite simply a masterpiece. *Be Thou My Vision* — a Kingsway release subtitled 'Celtic expressions of worship' is by comparison a pale reflection. It starts with promise — a Dave Bilbrough song called 'Sound The Trumpet' that has a definite Celtic edge. However the remainder of the songs are more 'meditative' than 'Celtic' and showcase a batch of songs beautifully played but NOT particularly in the category of Celtic!

The title song — an 8th century Irish hymn — contains stirring lyrics but is sadly given a very 'twee' arrangement. Coincidentally Iona's latest release *Journey Into The Morn* has a great rendition of this same tune and sung in Gaelic! Iona have been presenting audiences with a sonic picture of the history of Celtic Christianity for seven years and four albums and they wonderfully create a musical canvas with authentic sounds of Uilleann Pipes, tin whistles etc...The resurgence of interest in Celtic

history has increased the number of their listeners — and quite rightly so.

## NEW HEART

*Dave Bilbrough*

This album oozes integrity and honesty. There is something in it that makes the sentiments of the lyrics so believable — I guess you call it heart and anointing! 'Faithful And True' is a song which proves that simplicity is rightly coupled with adjectives such as 'striking', 'elegant' and 'classic'. It has a great melodic hook and the wonderful guitar and rhythmic undercurrent serve the song so well. 'You Are My Strength' is classic Bilbrough with an incredibly singable melody and great 'groove'. Mind you it's not alone. Even non-stompers will find it difficult to keep their feet under control on a good number of the tracks. 'Moving On' is a re-work of an old song but proves ably that it doesn't have to be new to be prophetic!

If the album has a weakness then it lies in the arrangement and production. Many of the ideas are great — there just aren't enough of them and spread across the whole album the repetition of ideas means the variety wears a bit thin. Fans of Dave will definitely want to get their hands on this release and for those less convinced it is well worth a listen!

*John Gibson*



## RELISH

*Joan Osborne*

I like this album but it must be played at decent volume. It is definitely not background music — too much crunchy guitar and rhythm for a relaxing listening experience!

Somewhere in the album is a mix of many new female singer/songwriters that seem popular at the moment such as Alanis Morissette and Sheryl Crow. We are treated to many sounds from the 'slow and grungy' to the rhythmic 'St Theresa' with the simply arranged mandolin and guitar supporting strong vocals from Ms Osborne.

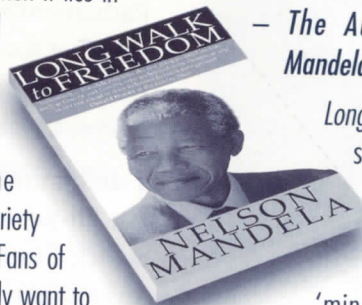
The most familiar track is the sparkling single 'One of Us' where she asks 'what if God was one of us, just a slob like one of us... would he be in heaven alone, nobody calling on the phone except for the Pope maybe, in Rome?' A question begging to be answered.

*Chris Tuke*

## LONG WALK TO FREEDOM

— *The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*

*Long Walk To Freedom* is the life story of a man of integrity who sacrificed everything — his career, home and family — so that South Africa's 'minorities' could gain political equality. During his adolescence Mandela became aware of the disparity between whites and non-whites, however he did not act against that disparity until he was in Johannesburg working to attain his legal articles. Mandela





joined the African National Congress and helped to lead the ANC's youth league and its civil disobedience campaign of the 1950s. As the government cracked down on the campaign, the ANC decided to meet violence with violence. Because of his role in the escalating campaign, Mandela was arrested, tried and imprisoned several times. During his long tenure at the infamous Robben Island Prison, Mandela refined his political beliefs, worked with other imprisoned minority leaders and fought for prisoners' rights. The South African government eventually began to talk with the ANC, but it wasn't until the early 90s that the apartheid system was dismantled and groundwork was laid for an election in which every South African could participate. The book concludes with Mandela contemplating his life after his inauguration as president of the new South Africa.

Megan Tasdela

### STREETLIFE

*An educational resource for Secondary Schools about Street Children produced by Jubilee Action*

This is a well-planned and user-friendly resource pack. It consists of ten lesson outlines designed for use in a 35-40 minute session. The pack has photocopiable student worksheets, pull-out miniposters, and free video loan from Jubilee Action.

There are also 'People Pages' which profile individual street children and tell their story. These are particularly useful in helping British children to identify with street children and to see them as individuals, not just as a collective 'problem'.

The materials have an attractive layout with

eye-catching details which will appeal to teenagers. The pack would be suitable both for schools and youth groups. As Steve Chalke has remarked, using this resource is 'sure to get the kids in your charge fired up about this issue'.

Jane Chappell

### CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP

Mike Morris

Is Christian Citizenship a new discipline or a new slant on an old one? A minority of Christians has long been interested in politics, but for the majority, this has been a 'turn-off'.

In this Pioneer Perspective, Mike takes the old concept, dusts it down, and widens its outlook. He believes that every Christian is called to active involvement in the business of his local community. That not only involves politics in its traditional understanding, but also all kinds of social action.

He justifies the concept biblically, and shares some practical experience from Revelation Church, but perhaps more practical suggestions concerning everyday issues such as supporting

fair trade, recycling, and getting involved in local education would not have gone amiss.

For a fledgling Christian Citizen or Politics group in a local Church, this would come in handy for the theory, but look elsewhere for the 'nuts and bolts'.

Jeremy Dann

Most of the items reviewed in  
Compass are available from  
Pioneer Direct



*'Politics is corrupt because society is corrupt. In a democracy, political values are a reflection of the values of the politicians, the society which nurtured them, and the individuals who put them in power'*

WILFRED WONG

*'Personal morality and political awareness go hand in hand'*

KEITH TONDEUR

*'We have an unprecedented opportunity to exercise our responsibility in applying biblical principles of truth, justice and righteousness to every area of our national life'*

LYNDON BOWRING

*'Organised religion is making Christianity political rather than making politics Christian'*

SIR LAURENS VAN DER POST

*'Many people seem disillusioned with politics. There is a sad predictability about the games which politicians play, the stances they take, and the sides they choose. How I long for leaders who will look beyond the next vote and dream a bigger dream of what our nation could become'*

ROB FROST



# Pride and prej

*The power of prejudice is tearing Britain apart. Marcia Lord examines the tragic course of events culminating in our current race wars*

**W**HITE RIOTERS attacked black Liverpoolians in the safety of their own homes. They finished off the job by looting and burning their houses.

It could be now. But that was one of our first race riots – back in 1919. And it marked the beginning of a tragic age of racial hatred for 20th century Britain.

Racial minorities make up a tiny percentage of the overall population. Yet race relations remains a highly emotive and newsworthy issue – drawing controversy, tension and conflict in its wake.

When we think of black people and politics, do we immediately think of Malcolm X, Nation of Islam and Martin Luther King Jnr? Perhaps our thoughts turn to the Labour Party. After all, blacks and Asians are now an integral part of mainstream politics. And their main vehicle is Labour – with such figureheads as Paul Boateng, Diane Abbott, Bernie Grant and Keith Vaz.

Yet it was in 1962 that Labour watered down their own opposition

to immigration legislation during parliamentary debate. That was their response to the 1961 Commonwealth Immigrants Bill.



Generally, blacks have been characterised as uneducated, lazy and naturally inferior – particularly in comparison with whites. It's part of a national tradition.

Anthony Trollope said in 1859: 'He (the black man) burns to be regarded as a scholar, puzzles himself with fine words, addicts himself to religion for the sake of appearance, and delights in aping the little graces of civilisation.'

'If you want to win his heart for an hour, call him a gentleman. But if you want to reduce him to despairing

obedience, tell him that his father and mother had tails like monkeys, and forbid him to think that he can have a soul like a white man.'

But did such attitudes change with the passage of time?

Much later, in 1950, the Secretary of State for the Colonies was asked if he envisioned self-government for African people. 'The Africans are savages,' he said, 'still eating each other in places like Nigeria.'

The early 60s political scene was marked by the cruel rhyme: 'If you want a nigger neighbour, vote Liberal or Labour'. At the time, Smethwick Conservative candidate Peter Griffiths told *The Times*, 'I wouldn't condemn anyone who said that (rhyme). I regard it as a manifestation of popular feeling'. He improved his position by 7.2 per cent over his predecessor. At least four other Labour candidates lost to the Conservatives on the issue of race and immigration. But what was that 'popular feeling' doing for the blacks?

West Indians became more apathetic to British politics after racist statements were issued by many local leaders of both major



# lice

rties. And it's taken nearly four  
ecades of unrest to shake up the  
olitical system to admit a few black  
and Asian MPs to Westminster.

etween 1971 and 1992, ethnic  
minorities increased by about two  
er cent to 4.8 per cent – a rise of  
ss than one million to 2.65  
million. Yet despite such a small  
proportion, issues of race and  
mmigration are often used to  
lect a government.

People are really afraid this  
country might be rather  
wamped by people with a  
different culture,' Conservative  
chief Margaret Thatcher told the  
BBC in January 1978.

You know, the British character  
has done so much for  
democracy, for law, and done so  
much throughout the world, that  
if there is any fear that it might be  
swamped, people are going to react  
and be rather hostile to those  
coming in.'

Her comments had the desired  
affect. They attracted votes back  
from both the National Front and  
the British National Party – and of  
course, gave the Conservatives a  
general election victory.

No wonder black people are  
marginalised – with this country's  
dismal track record in race relations.

Major political parties play on  
people's fears by talking about large  
numbers of immigrants 'flooding'  
the country. The fact that ethnic  
minority immigrants are fewer than  
European and white immigrants  
becomes meaningless. Even  
'immigrant' is synonymous with  
ethnic minorities.



'The Government ought to declare  
it to be part of the national policy,'  
said the editorial in a Cardiff  
newspaper, 'that this country is not  
to be regarded as an emigration

field, that no more immigrants (as  
distinguished from visitors) can be  
admitted – and that immigrants  
must return to whence they came.

'This must apply to black men from  
the British West Indies as well as  
from the United States.'

Unless black and Asian votes acquire  
parliamentary representation  
commensurate with their numbers,  
they can only be described as 'step-  
citizens'. But it's easy to blame the  
Government.

For we need to look into our own  
political field – the church hierarchy.

Is our leadership reflective of our  
congregation or the community?

Where are our black/Asian  
leaders? Do we practise our own  
forms of marginalisation?

But let's not box our ethnic  
minorities into just a couple of  
categories – either 'immigrant'  
or 'educated radical fighting  
black causes'. There's more to  
me than the colour of my skin.  
And when you marginalise me,  
you victimise me.

We need reconciliation. We  
must draw people back from  
their stereotype cages, fully  
embracing and loving one  
another.

It's time to show the world that the  
Church won't be marginalised. Nor  
will she treat other  
groups in that way.



*Marcia Lord  
speaks on cultural  
issues. She is  
married with two  
children. Her  
main quotes were  
taken from 'Black  
British/white  
British' by Dilip  
Hiro.*





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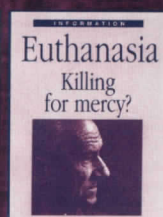
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**H**OW does the Christian politician reconcile his beliefs with the democratic demands of a secular state?

Take the recent example of Sunday trading. While it's necessary for many people to work on Sundays - the emergency services are the obvious examples - it's clear most do not.

Christ illustrated inevitable compromises with his 'ass in the ditch' analogy, reflecting the consistent common sense which characterised his ministry. I doubt if he would've been as sanguine about superstores opening their doors to commerce - more than he approved of the temple money changers.

Sunday trading perfectly illustrates the conflict between God and Mammon, while illuminating the dilemma for the Christian politician.

Sunday trading was something most of the nation wanted. So what right do democratically elected politicians have to oppose the will of the electorate?

The irresolute MP might grasp the excuse to transfer his responsibility to his constituents. But if MPs were always to behave in that manner, they'd be no more than conduits for the will of their flock.

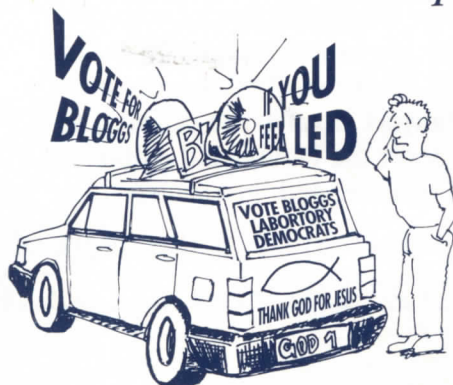
However, we empower them to make wise judgements for the common good. Capital punishment is a clear case where politicians refuse to bend to the lynch-mob mentality.

Back to Sunday. Nature tells us of the need to rest. Whether it's the trees standing dormant in winter or our

own nocturnal unconsciousness, there's a need to enjoy the calm that depends not only upon respite from work - but also on the prevailing ambience of a traditional Sunday.

# Trade barriers

*Should Christian politicians enforce their value system on a secular nation? Ian Mutch shares one point of view*



I'm sure that's why God ordained the Sabbath. In attacking it, Parliament has demonstrated a direct challenge to God's will.

Tragically, the near obsession with convenience has won the day on Sunday trading. People have come to view the availability of groceries as they do electricity, gas or water - with little thought for the broader picture and mental health of the nation.

No doubt there are communities where the problem is trickier than average. But the articulation of ludicrous excuses by city dwellers is as irksomely implausible as a French president's defence for radiating the South Pacific.

Can't the average family organise their shopping without polluting Sundays?

Opponents of Sunday trading employed both secular and biblical arguments. But it can only reflect

adversely upon the declining respect for Christian values that politicians leaned to the wishes of big business.

The laws of God were not concocted to prevent us enjoying ourselves - but

to discourage behaviour which leads to our eventual unhappiness.

Similarly, a clever design engineer will recommend a particular lubricant for an engine to

prevent its premature failure.

The problem for Christian politicians lies in the reconciliation of Christian conviction with popular demand - which in a predominantly secular society is becoming increasingly difficult.

Of course it's easy, when free from such a weighted yoke, to recommend the overt avowal of Christian credentials. But that's precisely what I feel every sincere Christian politician should do.

While recognising the pantheistic and atheistic composition of contemporary Britain, Christian parliamentary candidates should advertise their faith. They should make it clear that if elected, their decisions will be guided by their religious convictions.

Those unhappy with that stance needn't vote for those candidates who, if elected, will enjoy the authority of a popular mandate to promote the will of God. Only by such honesty can the promotion of God's will be advanced within a democratic context.



*Ian Mutch is a freelance photojournalist and is currently Press & PR officer for The Motorcycle Action Group. He lives in east London.*



# The Movement for Christian Democracy

The MCD is an all party and all denominational group committed to promoting Christian values in politics thereby changing the political culture of Britain

SOCIAL JUSTICE

RESPECT FOR LIFE

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The MCD produces a newspaper, The Christian Democrat, sent free to members it gives a Christian insight into politics, news and current affairs. MCD also produces policy papers and documents which promote a new kind of politics - British Christian democracy, based on our six principles. With information the MCD offers hope to a disillusioned church - that it can make a difference to the governing of our nation.

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# The last word

Should Christians be involved in politics? This was the question that I set out to address in this article. Knowing what an important publication it would be appearing in didn't make my task any easier. I wanted to write something useful and serious and good, instead of the trivial nonsense I usually pour out. Alas, hours of tearful prayer and fierce thought produced only the discovery that Roy Hattersley is an anagram of The Tory Slayer. That doesn't get us far, does it, for goodness sake! What's the matter with me?

Then – an inspiration. I would write to a Christian MP soliciting his views on the matter of Christian involvement in politics (I think we all know where that idea came from, don't we?). Here's his reply, and I believe it leaves little more to be said on the subject.



Dear Mr Plus,

First of all, may I say that I am quite sure everyone will agree that there has already been too much beating about the bush on this issue. The time has come for someone to make a committed stand on one side or the other. There has been enough talk, and more than enough discussion. What is needed now is the courage to put forward a definite viewpoint and stand by that viewpoint whatever the consequences.

Christian involvement in politics is essential! So say those who take that particular line and I am in full agreement with any action or decision designed to ensure that such an option remains a viable alternative. The arguments put forward in favour of non-involvement are equalled in potency only by the highly respected views of those who have elected not to adopt that particular stance.

Mr Plush, let us not allow personal prejudice and feelings to influence us, except to the extent that they guide us to a solution based on certain facts that, in the final analysis, need to be ignored if the truth is to be served. Adherents to my own denominationally delineated section of the wider church are quite clear on the issue. We intend to follow a well defined, prayerfully identified policy with regard to this issue until that policy is rendered obsolete by virtue of its inability to fulfil those spiritual objectives which caused it to be advanced in the first place. This kind of holy consistency, involving, as it patently does, refusal to postulate a sterile equation between theoretical considerations and practical application, should result in this issue of Christianity and politics remaining within the boundaries of a situation that is defined by its insistence on strong decisions concerning the removal of restrictions on potential resolutions of this specific debate.

The position of the branch of churchmanship represented by myself and other individually oriented devotees of that persuasion, is therefore clear. We both vigorously oppose and wholeheartedly support resistance to measures that are, in our view, demonically exclusive of either side of the argument.

And, Mr Pass, to those in the church who do not care to be identified with this kind of straight talking, we simply and openly say, "Leave it to those who do".

Yours sincerely

(PLEASE DO NOT PRINT NAME)







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**JEFF LUCAS** Director, Equipped To Lead

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