



# “A House of prayer for all people”

*The Establishment of the Church of England in 2023:  
Missional Perspectives*

*by*

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of

**Alan Beck**

My dear friend, still sorely missed.

*Give rest, O Christ,  
to your servant with your saints,  
where sorrow and pain are no more,  
neither sighing, but life everlasting.*

## ABSTRACT

The establishment of the Church of England—ie her unique and close relationship with the State, continues to be a contentious issue in the modern English political and religious discourse.

This dissertation maps the missional activities of the Church of England in the 2020s, and seeks to investigate how her Establishment has allowed her to carry out her missional objectives, as outlined in the Anglican Communion's Five Marks Mission.

A brief overview of the historical background of the establishment of the Church of England will be given in order to examine the political context within which the Church continues to minister to the general public in England. Data from the recent censuses, the past Mission Statistics published by the Church of England, and financial records of the Church and other faith groups will also be surveyed to aid the discussion of the social context of the Church's establishment and how the Church, through her structures and assets, respond to the change in England's demographics.

This dissertation argues that despite the Church's establishment gives the impression that the Church is holding unfairly more political power and privilege than her ecumenical and interfaith colleagues, in reality, her established status continues to allow her to care for the people of the nation with a reach no other faith groups can come close to achieving. Her establishment has also been successful in maintaining fair religious representation and participation in politics in general.

While this dissertation acknowledges that the establishment continues to be a sore point for many and that within the Church there are also disagreements on whether the Church should continue to be established, there still lacks sufficient reasons to justify the political and financial cost that the disestablishment process will incur. Therefore, to allow the weak establishment of the Church to continue, but not without constant scrutiny, would be the *via media* solution which has always been a distinctive mark of Anglican polity and ecclesiology.

## Table of Contents

Edition notice	2
Acknowledgments	3
Dedication	4
Abstract	5
Table of Contents	6
Glossary and Remarks	8
<b>1 Introduction</b>	10
1.1 Rethinking the Church of England’s established status in 2023	10
1.2 Setting the scene: the Census of 2021 and how things have changed in the past decade	11
1.3 What this dissertation will set out to do	13
<b>2 Literature Review</b>	14
2.1 The relationships between the Church in England, the English State and the Papacy throughout English history	14
2.1.1 Contesting authority—The Crown and the Papacy in the Middle Ages	14
2.1.2 The Church and State entwined—The Reformation era to the 18th Century	15
2.1.3 Towards greater religious toleration and regaining the Church’s independence in governance—The Oxford Movement, and developments in the 19th and 20th Century	17
2.2 How is the establishment expressed today and why is it a contended heritage?	19
2.3 What is mission, and how is that understood by the Church of England today?	21
2.4 What would disestablishment look like?	22
<b>3 ‘A Christian presence in every community’—The Church of England’s national Mission</b>	24
3.1 ‘To teach, baptise and nurture new believers’ (second Mark of Mission)	25
3.1.1 Public worship and Pastoral Services	25
3.1.2 Church of England Schools	26
3.2 ‘To respond to human need by loving service’ (third Mark of Mission)—the Church’s pastoral ministry within public institutions	27
3.2.1 Chaplaincies	27
3.2.2 Responding to the needs of the Nation and beyond	29
3.3 ‘To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom’ and ‘To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation’ (First and Fourth Mark of Mission)	31
3.3.1 Lords Spiritual’s role in British politics	31

3.3.2 The Church of England in the public square	33
3.3.3 Interfaith dialogue and mutual support	33
3.4 The British Monarch's role in promoting interfaith relations	36
3.5.1 Celebrating with the whole nation—the Church of England's role in England's public ceremonies	37
3.5 Summary	38
<b>4 The way forward—is there any place for an established church in a world of religious and cultural diversity?</b>	40
4.1 Political secularism	40
4.2 Civil liberties	42
4.3 Power or 'appearance of power'?—the Church's privilege and accountability	43
<b>5 Establishment in next decade and beyond</b>	45
<b>6 Conclusion</b>	48
Bibliography	50

## Glossary

In this dissertation, unless otherwise specified, I use the term the ‘English monarch’ to denote the sovereign of **England**, who is, due to historic Acts of Union, concurrently the monarch of Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. I refer to the English monarch solely to discuss their status in territorial England and in relation to the English Government and the Church in England.

<b>Anglican(s)</b>	In the main body of this dissertation, <i>of or pertaining to</i> , or <i>those who identify as belonging to</i> the Church of England <b>only</b> .
<b>Anglican Communion</b>	Anglican Churches (also called ‘Provinces’) around the world. Each province is autonomous and governed independently. It is said that the provinces are ‘interdependent’ to one another, and are guided by four ‘Instruments of Communion’: The Archbishop of Canterbury, The Anglican Consultative Council, The Primates Meeting, and the Lambeth Conference.
<b>Clergy</b>	When used unqualified, I mean specifically clergy of the Church of England, that is her deacons, priests, bishops and archbishops.
<b>Disestablishmentarian(ism)</b>	Describes the position of someone who is in favour of the disestablishment.
<b>Establishment</b>	The recognition by the secular authority of a particular religious entity as <i>of</i> the State. Establishment implies some degree of closeness, or at least, cooperation between the religious entity and the State. When used unqualified, ‘ <b>disestablishment</b> ’ refers to the disestablishment of the Church of England.
<b>General Synod</b>	The legislative body of some Anglican Churches. When used unqualified, I mean specifically the General Synod of the Church of England.
<b>The Crown</b>	The British Monarch, the Sovereign of the United Kingdom. For the purposes of this dissertation, only their sovereignty within England (ie not Wales, Scotland, or Northern Ireland) will be discussed.



<b>The State</b>	When used unqualified, the Government of <b>England</b> and/or her legislative body, the Houses of Parliament.
<b>The Church</b>	When used unqualified, I mean the <i>established</i> Church of England, and not the Church universal. In this dissertation I sometimes use ‘the Church of England’ in full for emphasis or clarity.
<b>The Church of England</b>	The ecclesial entity which separated from the Catholic Church during the Reformation, the Mother Church of the worldwide Anglican Communion. The established Church in England.
<b>The Church <i>in</i> England</b>	The ecclesial entity which has existed in England since the seventh Century, the ‘ <i>Ecclesia Anglicana</i> ’.

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**Accuracy of information cited**

In this dissertation, ‘currently’ refers to the period during which this dissertation was written, ie anytime between September 2022 and June 2023.

The discussion of the relationship between the Church and State involves the consideration of a vast amount of data, which is subject to rapid change due to their political nature. Every effort has been made to ensure statistical information, governmental policies, the canons of the Church of England and the laws of England cited in this dissertation are accurate as of the day of submission.

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**Pronouns and capitalisations**

Following the tradition, I employ the third person singular feminine pronoun she/her to refer to the Church—the Church of England and the Church universal.

In instances where the gender of the person is unspecified, such as ‘the monarch’, I employ the pronoun they/them as a *singular* pronoun.

When ‘bishop’ or ‘archbishop’ is used as part of an ecclesial title, it is capitalised. Eg Bishop of Truro, but ‘the bishops of the Church’.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Rethinking the Church of England's established status in 2023

Queen Elizabeth II passed away on 8 September 2022; following her death was a flurry of national events that celebrated her life. Her long reign, some commentators noted, was part of the reason why the question of disestablishment never gained substantial backing in the past 70 years.<sup>1</sup> Yet, as English society continues to diversify into a multi-ethnic and multicultural society, and progresses towards what can be considered as 'Western liberalism', the existence of a state church in modern England is jarring for many. The Census of 2021, published in the course of the writing of this dissertation, revealed that for the first time since its inauguration, less than half of the population in England identifies as Christian.

The failure to reach a consensus on the reform of the House of Lords in the past means that currently there are still 26 senior diocesan bishops of the Church of England sitting in the House of Lords *ex officio*, a privilege unparalleled in any other parliamentary democracy in the Western world. Critics have argued that the Church cannot justify her senior bishops' privilege of sitting in the House of Lords as Lords Spiritual since she is no longer even representative among the religious groups in England themselves.<sup>23</sup> Some have even pointed out that the only other parliamentary political system that has seats reserved for religious leaders is Iran.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, clergy are canonically required to swear allegiance to the reigning monarch when they are ordained, installed, or licensed to a new post.<sup>5</sup> The Church of England's established status has not only religious, but also legal and political implications for her position and influence in modern English society.

Those who argue against establishment cite the declining Christian population and the increasingly culturally and ethnically diverse English societies as some of their reasons; while others, including non-Christian religious groups, have come to see the value of retaining visible and accountable religious participation and scrutiny in the British political system.

As King Charles III is crowned by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Church of England's centrality in the ceremonial life of the nation is once again brought to the fore. This dissertation

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<sup>1</sup> Rodger, T., Williamson, P., & M. Grimley. (Eds) *The church of England and British politics since 1900* in *Studies in Modern British Religious History Volume 41*. (Cambridge: Boydell Press, 2020). 31.

<sup>2</sup> Vernon Bogdanor as quoted in Booth, R., Duncan, P. & C. A. García. 'Calls grow to disestablish Church of England as Christians become minority.' *The Guardian*. 29 Nov 2022. <<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/nov/29/calls-grow-to-disestablish-church-of-england-as-christians-become-minority>>. See also National Secular Society. 'Scrap Bishops Bench'. <<https://www.secularism.org.uk/scrap-bishops-bench/>>. Both retrieved 25 Jan 2023.

<sup>3</sup> UK Parliament. 'How do you become a Member of the House of Lords?' <<https://www.parliament.uk/about/mps-and-lords/about-lords/lords-appointment/>>. Retrieved 30 Jan 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Though this comparison is somewhat unfair as this dissertation will show later, that, the fact one can raise objection to the existence of Lords Spiritual without facing any retribution is precisely because of the freedom of speech and religion secured by the broadly Christian heritage and political involvement of Christians in the development of British democracy and politics.

<sup>5</sup> 'C13 Of the Oath of Allegiance'. In The Church of England. *The Canons of the Church of England*. (London: Church House Publishing, 2022). 97.

seeks to evaluate how the Church carries out her mission in this specific time and space, and how her established status facilitates part of her response to the needs of the nation.

## 1.2 Setting the scene: the Census of 2021 and how things have changed in the past decade

In 2021, the total number of usual residents in England has increased to 56,490,048 people from 53,107,200 people in 2011.<sup>6</sup>

Among those 56.49 million people,<sup>7</sup> about 56.0 million (94%) of them chose to disclose their religion. 27.5 million people (46.2%) described themselves as ‘Christian’; hence, for the first time in the history of the census, those who described themselves as Christian fell below 50% of the total population. This decrease is congruent with the trend of decreasing religious membership and attendance from 1961 recorded elsewhere.<sup>8</sup>

Despite less than half the population describing themselves as Christian, Christianity remains the most common religion among others in England—after ‘Christian’, ‘no religion’ was the second most common response (22.2 million—37.2%, from 14.1 million—25.2%) in 2011, followed by ‘Muslim’ (3.9 million—6.5%, from 2.7 million—4.9% in 2011).<sup>9</sup>

As shocking as the news outlets would like to portray this revelation, the steady decline of Christianity in England has been well documented. As early as 1940, C. S. Lewis already noted that in his opinion ‘the majority of the British people are not Christians’;<sup>10</sup> this is also echoed by the Church of England’s official publication two decades ago.<sup>11</sup> A report by the British Social Attitudes (BSA) division of the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) in 2010 found that affiliation with the Church of England had halved since 1983,<sup>12</sup> and this figure has further halved in 2018.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Numbers cited are as of the day of the Census in the respective years stated. ONS. *Population Estimates for England and Wales, Mid-2011 (2011 Census-based)*. 25 September 2012. <<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20160107154156/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/pop-estimate/population-estimates-for-england-and-wales/mid-2012/index.html>> & ONS. *Population and household estimates, England and Wales: Census 2021, unrounded data*. <<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationandhouseholdestimatesenglandandwales/census2021unroundeddata>>. Both retrieved 24 Jan 2023.

<sup>7</sup> All figures are rounded by the ONS. Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Triandafyllidou, A. & Magazzini, T. (Eds.). *Routledge Handbook on the Governance of Religious Diversity*. (Oxford: Routledge, 2021). 47.

<sup>9</sup> These statistics are never entirely reliable, since the methodology employed is not foolproof: it is acknowledged that for most households one person from the household fills in the census on behalf of the whole household. In the question of religion, therefore, non religious parents may declare all their family members in the house as non religious when the reality is that their children may declare otherwise.

<sup>10</sup> Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1952). 99.

<sup>11</sup> See footnote 23 below.

<sup>12</sup> National Centre for Social Research. (NatCen). ‘12. Religion: Losing Faith?’ In *British Social Attitudes 28*. 2010 Edition. 173-184. <[https://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/38958/bsa28\\_12religion.pdf](https://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/38958/bsa28_12religion.pdf)>. Retrieved 23 Feb 2023. Here 173.

<sup>13</sup> NatCen. ‘Religion Identity, behaviour and belief over two decades.’ In *British Social Attitudes 36*. 2019 Edition. 17-44. <[https://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39293/1\\_bsa36\\_religion.pdf](https://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39293/1_bsa36_religion.pdf)>. Retrieved 23 Feb 2023. Here 20.

These statistics, however, do not reflect the reality of religious *participation* among the population. Those who put themselves down as adhering to no religion may well, for whatever reasons, turn up for Christian services on Christmas or Easter; at the same time, those who declare themselves Christian may not have set foot in a church for years. This problem was addressed by the detailed research by the BSA in 2018,<sup>14</sup> in which the main analysis claims that the decline in religious observance is generational, rather than purely ideological; while a third of over-75s identify as Anglican, almost none do below the age of 25.<sup>15</sup> It follows that there is a degree of future decline ‘built in’, as more children are raised in households that do not have any religious affiliation, and they are less likely to develop any religious affiliation later in their lives.<sup>16</sup> However, this alone does not account for the drop in the Christian share.<sup>17</sup>

According to the statistics published by the Church of England in 2022, church attendance among Anglicans has decreased nationally over the past four decades. The average congregation size of Anglican parishes shrank from 112 persons in 1980<sup>18</sup> to 89 in 2011<sup>19</sup>, 76 in 2019,<sup>20</sup> and most recently to 66 in 2021.<sup>21</sup> Naturally, other rites of passage observed through the Church of England have also declined over the years as a result of the general decline in religious observance. However, it is important to note that, as of 2005, the Church of England conducted 43% of all funerals in England; and that although the number of Anglican marriages also declined, the proportion of Anglican marriages to secular marriages in England remains higher than average.<sup>22</sup>

‘*Mission Shaped Church*’, a report issued by the Church of England in 2004 on how she may adapt her missional strategies to best minister within England’s forever changing political and cultural landscape, provides a sobering summary of the enormous task that the Church is facing in the

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<sup>14</sup> NB Although the statistics are taken from the whole of United Kingdom and the sample size is infinitely smaller at less than 4000 participants and limits its comparability to the 2021 Census, it nevertheless is a valuable resource to consider in this dissertation.

<sup>15</sup> NatCen. ‘Religion’, 22.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>17</sup> Voas, D. ‘Christian decline: How it’s measured and what it means’. *British Religion in Numbers*. 25 Jan 2023. <<http://www.brin.ac.uk/christian-decline-how-its-measured-and-what-it-means/>>. Retrieved 1 Mar 2023. According to Voas, 54% of the population will still identify as Christian if the drop is entirely due to cohort replacement.

<sup>18</sup> British Religion in Numbers. ‘Church Attendance in Britain, 1980-2015.’ <<http://www.brin.ac.uk/figures/church-attendance-in-britain-1980-2015/>>. Retrieved 6 Mar 2023. Figures in footnote 16 and 17 are estimates obtained by dividing the total national attendance by the total number of Church of England parishes (12,232), given in Eames, K. ‘Statistics for Mission 2021’. (London: Data Services, Church House, 2022). <<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/2021%20Statistics%20For%20Mission.pdf>>. Retrieved 6 Mar 2023.

<sup>19</sup> Archbishops’ Council. ‘Statistics for Mission 2011’. (London: Research and Statistics, Church House, 2013). <<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Statistics%20for%20Mission%202011.pdf>>. Retrieved 6 Mar 2023.

<sup>20</sup> Eames. ‘Statistics for Mission 2021’. 4f.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. One must bear in mind of the effect of COVID-19 on church attendance, it being illegal for a good part of 2020, and that it will take some time for the attendance to ‘recover’ from the impact of the pandemic.

<sup>22</sup> Morris, R. M. (Ed.). *Church and State in 21st Century Britain: The Future of Church Establishment*. (London: Palgrave, 2009). 160. These two figures will be discussed further in chapter 3.2.1.

20<sup>th</sup> century as well as a comprehensive description of the context for this dissertation's main discussion:<sup>23</sup>

The consequences for a national church, used to operating among people and institutions on the assumptions of Christendom, are acute. The Church of England bases a significant part of its identity on its physical presence in every community, and on a 'come to us' strategy. But as community becomes more complex, mere geographical presence is no longer a guarantee that we can connect. The reality is that mainstream culture no longer brings people to the church door. We can no longer assume that we can automatically reproduce ourselves, because the pool of people who regard church as relevant or important is decreasing with every generation.

### 1.3 What this dissertation will set out to do

It must be stressed that this dissertation has not been written as a rebuttal against the recent works on disestablishment, such as that by Jonathan Chaplin<sup>24</sup>; this dissertation was written solely with the intention of addressing and clarifying the practical implications of the Church's establishment in modern England and how the Church carries out her mission within the established framework in recent years.

In this dissertation, by giving an overview of the Church of England's historic relationships with the State and the wider world, I will explore what the Church of England believes to be her 'mission' in England and how she carries out her missional objectives within the structure of establishment. I will also examine to what extent the Church of England serves the *general* public of England, and how she has taken the lead in missional activities as the established Church *in* England. This will be done by analysing data from the recent Mission Statistics published by the Church of England and other publications, both from the Church and other secular organisations.

It has to be noted that, while it is still a legal requirement for most school pupils in England and Wales to attend an act of 'collective worship' of a 'broadly Christian character' daily,<sup>25</sup> this will not be considered part of the result of the Church of England's establishment in this dissertation, since she does not regulate nor direct such worship on a national level. Secondly, this dissertation will not consider the matter of the appointments of bishops either, because the process has changed radically such that the political involvement has been rendered mere formality.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Archbishops' Council. *Mission-shaped Church*. (London: Church House Publishing, 2004). 11.

<sup>24</sup> Chaplin, J. *Beyond Establishment*. (London: SCM, 2022).

<sup>25</sup> 1998 c. 31. *School Standards and Framework Act 1998*, §70. For the Church's ministry among educational institutions see chapter 3.1.2.

<sup>26</sup> For a summary of the process of nominating and appointing bishops, see Cranmer, F., Lucas, J., & B. Morris. *Church and State: A mapping exercise*. (London: University College London, 2006). 24-25.

## 2. Literature Review

In this section, I will trace the history of establishment in England, the mission of the Church, and what disestablishment could look like should it happen in the future. These will provide the framework within which the Church's mission within her established status will be considered later in this dissertation.

### 2.1 The relationships between the Church in England, the English State and the Papacy through English history

The relationships between the Church in England, the State and the papacy have grown organically over many centuries; for most of it, the partnerships were difficult at the best of times. In the course of my research it became clear that it was impossible to dissect and discuss these tangled relationships separately. Many comprehensive accounts of the historical development of the Church of England's origin and establishment are available, thus I will only provide a brief survey of some of the key moments in this complicated web of relations below. In particular, I will highlight when the question of autonomy and jurisdiction was a source of contention between the Crown and the papacy.

#### 2.1.1 Contesting authority—The Crown and the Papacy in the Middle Ages<sup>27</sup>

The deep provenance of the relationship between the Crown and the Church in England can be traced all the way back to the Middle Ages. During William the Conqueror's reign, he personally gave the episcopal ring and staff to the bishops during their investiture; at that time, the practice of a ruling nobility choosing and installing a bishop or an abbot was common in continental Europe until it was banned by the Council of Bari in 1099.<sup>28</sup> However, despite the Pope's objection, English Bishops continued to pay homage to the monarch before their consecration since the time of Henry I.<sup>29</sup>

William I sought some degree of independence from the papacy. For example, no Englishman was to acknowledge a Pope as 'apostolic' until the king has issued his consent. He also set various limitations on the Roman pontiff's influence in his land, such as forbidding any papal legate to land in England without a licence issued by the royal court;<sup>30</sup> the tension between the Crown and Papacy fighting over jurisdiction and authority began centuries before England's irreparable break with Rome during the Reformation era.

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<sup>27</sup> For a concise overview of establishment in this period see: Garbett, C. *Church and State in England* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1950). 30-49.

<sup>28</sup> Known as the 'Investiture Controversy'. See: Cantor, N. F. *Church, Kingship, and Lay Investiture in England, 1089–1135*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1958). 8-9.

<sup>29</sup> *The Archbishops' Committee on Church and State: Report, with appendices*. (London, SPCK:1916). 9. Referenced as 'The Selborne Committee' hereafter. This is still the current practice in the Church of England, see: Bursell, Rupert. "The Clerical Oath of Allegiance." In *Ecclesiastical Law Journal*. 17(3) (2015): 295–305.

<sup>30</sup> *The Selborne Committee*, 9.

Furthermore, William I separated ecclesiastical (spiritual) and secular (temporal) jurisdictions, and the most important distinction in power was that it was up to the temporal courts to decide if the matter was secular or not. Under the separate judicial systems, clergy who committed a criminal offence in Henry II's time were tried in the ecclesiastical court,<sup>31</sup> and it was said that a hundred clerical murderers were allowed free.<sup>32</sup> Thomas Becket, then Archbishop of Canterbury, insisted on his authority over the temporal court, and was martyred by four knights who took upon themselves to rid the King of the stubborn abbot.<sup>33</sup>

The late Middle Ages saw the gradual growth of the papal claims with regard to the English nation and the English Crown, exacting more and more material support from England. This was sometimes done through granting costly papal dispensations to allow men to hold more than one bishopric, or to commit other ecclesiastical irregularities such as contracting marriages within the forbidden degrees of relationship.<sup>34</sup>

### 2.1.2 The Church and State entwined—The Reformation era to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>35</sup>

In 1534, two Acts of Parliament were passed to consolidate and formalise the English monarch's legal and spiritual role in the Church in England.

The Submission of the Clergy Act states that no canons of the Church could be made unless the convocations have been assembled by the monarch's writ, and that the monarch gives their royal licence for the making of the canons, and finally, canons are not enacted until the royal assent is given.<sup>36</sup> The Act of Supremacy, on the other hand, established the English monarch as the 'Supreme Governor' of the 'Church of England', replacing the Pope as the highest temporal authority in the apostolic *Ecclesia Anglicana*.<sup>37</sup> Although this was briefly revoked when Mary I became Queen of England in 1553,<sup>38</sup> it was reverted under the 'Elizabethan Religious Settlement' during Elizabeth I's reign.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Though they had to first 'plead' in the temporal court, and upon claiming to be a member of clergy, they would be transferred to the ecclesiastical court for trial.

<sup>32</sup> *The Selborne Committee*. 10.

<sup>33</sup> Staunton, M. *The lives of Thomas Becket*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001). 30-31.

<sup>34</sup> *The Selborne Committee*. 15-16.

<sup>35</sup> For a concise overview of establishment in this period see: Garbett. *Church and State*. 50-95.

<sup>36</sup> 25 Hen. VIII C19. Despite much of it has been repealed, this process of making and amending canon is still in effect today. See: 'GS 2269C Draft Amending Canon 42: Petition to the Crown'. <<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/GS%202269C%20Petition%20for%20Royal%20Licence%20and%20Assent%20for%20AC%2042.pdf>>. Retrieved 17 Feb 2023.

<sup>37</sup> 26 Hen.VIII C1.

<sup>38</sup> 1 Mary, st. 2, C2 & 1 & 2 Ph & M C8.

<sup>39</sup> 1 Eliz. 1 c 1 & 1 Eliz. 1 C2.

Yet it would be incorrect to claim that the Church of England's establishment 'began' at the Reformation.<sup>40</sup> Such confusion arises when one considers the Church's establishment solely as her relationship with the *Government* of England. Moreover, it has been pointed out that the Church had been legally defined as 'ordered and established' during Edward III's reign.<sup>41</sup> An example of this can be found in the history of coronations in England;<sup>42</sup> apart from a few exceptions, the English monarch has always been crowned by the Archbishop of Canterbury in Westminster Abbey before and after the Reformation.<sup>43</sup> Hence, a more accurate description of the nuanced change in the Church-State relationship after the Reformation is that 'establishment' moved from an 'unwritten' assumption to a more 'official' understanding of her being 'the Church by law established'.

Since the Middle Ages and beyond the Reformation era, bishops (and abbots before the Reformation) were often barons with feudal obligations and political duties. For example, the position of Lord Chancellor has almost always been exclusively held by a member of the clergy, a trend which only ceased under the reign of Elizabeth I.<sup>44</sup> After the Stuart Restoration, clerics were again appointed to important positions in the realm, such as the appointment of Bishop Juxon of London to Lord High Treasurer and First Lord of the Admiralty by Charles I.<sup>45</sup> Subsequently, after the Glorious Revolution, as Samuel Johnson lamented, there renewed a 'close connection between parliamentary interest and ecclesiastical preferment'; clerics have long been politically and financially invested in the matters of the State, though at this stage they did so to advance personal gains and the claims of the Church.

In 1689, the Parliament insisted on the Protestant character of the British monarch by passing the Bill of Rights, and subsequently in 1701 it secured perpetual royal Protestant succession to the English throne through the Act of Settlement.<sup>46</sup> A mere three years later, Queen Anne established, on her ministers' recommendation, a fund to alleviate poverty among the clergy of the day. This is known as Queen Anne's Bounty. The bounty functioned initially by using the annual contribution of parishes to purchase lands which then generated extra income for the poorer parishes, known as 'augmentation'. The bounty later expanded its sources of funding

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<sup>40</sup> Such as that in National Secular Society. 'Separating Church and State: The Case for Disestablishment'. 2017. <<https://www.secularism.org.uk/uploads/nss-disestablishment-report-2017.pdf>>. Retrieved 10 May 2023.

<sup>41</sup> Garbett. *Church and State in England*. 30.

<sup>42</sup> This is further discussed in the Coronation of Charles III in chapter 3.4.1.

<sup>43</sup> Even in those exceptional cases, the monarch was crowned by a senior cleric of the Church *in* England.

<sup>44</sup> From either Regenbald under Edward the Confessor or Herfast under William the Conqueror as the first Lord Chancellor of England, to Nicholas Heath under Mary I.

<sup>45</sup> Sykes, N. *Church and State in England in the XVIIIth Century*. (Cambridge: CUP, 1934). 43.

<sup>46</sup> Morris, R. M. (Ed.). *Church and State in 21st Century Britain: The Future of Church Establishment*. (London: Palgrave, 2009). 1. For a detailed examination of the Establishment in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century see: Sykes. *Church and State. Passim*.



through investments from Parliament and other benefactors, thus its operation is another example of the close cooperation between the Crown, the State, and the Church.<sup>47</sup>

### 2.1.3 Towards greater religious toleration and regaining the Church's independence in governance—The Oxford Movement, and developments in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century

In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, some important Acts of Parliament were passed which changed the religious landscape of England permanently. In 1829, the Roman Catholic Relief Act was passed which permitted Roman Catholics to sit in the Parliament;<sup>48</sup> in 1846, the Religious Disabilities Act removed restrictions against dissenters and Catholics in property ownership and access to education.<sup>49</sup>

At the same time, the 'Tractarians', led by John Newman and John Keble, judged that the Church's establishment uncondusive to the spiritual interest of the nation. They were dissatisfied that the Church was unable to declare her doctrines and to confirm, change, and repeal her canons. Keble advocated that the 'establishment must go' if this situation is not remedied.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, reclaiming the ecclesial liberty of the Church was the tractarians' ultimate concern regarding the Church's establishment—Newman, after he had converted to Roman Catholicism, cited the establishment as one of the elements which he felt was incompatible with the 'apostolic principles' of the ordering of the Church.<sup>51</sup> Concerning the Anglican understanding of ecclesiology and Church self-governance, Fr John Neville Figgis CR posed a question which is worth quoting substantially:<sup>52</sup>

What really concerns us [...] whether or no [the Church] be conceived as possessing any living power of self-development, or whether it be conceived either as a creation of the state, or if allowed a private title[,] is to be held rigidly under the trust deeds of her foundation, thereby enslaved to the dead.

[...] Does the Church exist by some inward living force, with powers of self-development like a person, or is she a mere aggregate, a fortuitous concourse of ecclesiastical atoms, treated as may be as one for the purposes of convenience, but with no real claim to a mind of will of her own, except so far as the civil power sees good to invest her for the nonce with a fiction of unity?

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<sup>47</sup> Church Commissioners for England. 'Church Commissioners' Research Into Historic Links To Transatlantic Chattel Slavery'. 2023. <<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/Church%20Commissioners%20for%20England%20-%20Research%20into%20historic%20links%20to%20transatlantic%20chattel%20slavery%20-%20report.pdf>>. 11-16. Retrieved 23 Jun 2023. The report also covers Queen Anne's Bounty problematic relationship with transatlantic slave trades.

<sup>48</sup> 10 Geo. 4. C7.

<sup>49</sup> 9 & 10 Vict. C59.

<sup>50</sup> Keble as quoted in Battiscombe, G. *John Keble*. (London: Constable, 1963). 301.

<sup>51</sup> Newman, N. H. *Certain Difficulties felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching. Vol 1*. (Longmans Green, 1885). 101.

<sup>52</sup> Figgis, J. H. *Churches in the Modern State*. (London: Longmans Green, 1913). 39f.

Up to this point, the Church of England has always relied on the Parliament to legislate on her behalf any changes to her canons. This situation was remedied in 1919, when the National Assembly Bill received Royal Assent, enabling the Church of England to form a National Assembly (also known as the ‘Church Assembly’) for the first time since her conception. The Church Assembly discussed matters relating to the governance of the Church of England, and was vested with the power to amend and repeal current Acts of Parliament relating to the Church, as well as agreeing on measures that would then be presented to the Parliament for approval before receiving Royal Assent.<sup>53</sup>

Yet, the formation of the Church Assembly did not prevent the ‘Prayer Book Crisis’ in 1928, when the Parliament rejected the proposed revision of the Book of Common Prayer.<sup>54</sup> In the aftermath of the crisis, the Archbishop of Canterbury Randall Davidson resigned, and the Church of England did not formally produce a new and complete *alternative* prayer book (Alternative Service Book, ‘ASB’) until 1980.<sup>55</sup>

There were instances when the relationship between the State and the Church was warmer, especially during the abdication crisis in 1936, when the Cabinet consulted extensively with Cosmo Lang, the Archbishop of Canterbury, throughout the process which led to Edward VIII’s abdication.<sup>56</sup> The State also looked for moral support and spiritual guidance from the Church during the two great wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. However, there were more occasions when the Church and State were at odds in more recent times, such as the State being dissatisfied with the Church’s response to the Falkland War, and lately, in the Church leaders’ criticism of governmental policies regarding refugees crossing the English Channel in small boats, which will be discussed later as I examine the work of the bishops in the House of Lords and their involvement in the wider British political scene.

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<sup>53</sup> Torrance, D. *The relationship between church and state in the United Kingdom*. House of Commons Library Briefing, 12 August 2022. 8.

<sup>54</sup> Bell, G. K. A. *Randall Davidson: Archbishop of Canterbury*. (Oxford: OUP, 1935). 1325-1368.

<sup>55</sup> Emphasis on alternative as the 1662 Book of Common Prayer remains the Church of England’s normative forms of worship. The ASB was preceded by the Alternative Services Series 1, 2, and 3, each of which does not constitute a complete book which contains *all* forms of services required by a parish. See Bradshaw, P. (Ed.). *Companion to Common Worship*. (London: SPCK, 2001). 16-20.

<sup>56</sup> Lockhart, J. *Cosmo Gordon Lang*. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1949). 396-407.

## 2.2 How is the establishment expressed today and why is it a contended heritage?

The word ‘establishment’ gives an impression of privilege; it is understandable how people may associate the Church’s establishment as the Church extending her power and influence over the political, social and economic life of the nation and individual liberties.<sup>57</sup> In reality, the Church’s establishment is expressed in the following ways:<sup>58</sup>

1. The Church has a special relationship with the State; her status is recognised legally and officially.
2. The Monarch, as Supreme Governor, is the temporal head of the Church; they are crowned by the Archbishop of Canterbury (or a senior cleric appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury). The Coronation is a Church of England service and follows her rites.
3. Church of England bishops are officially appointed by the Prime Minister, they pay homage to the Sovereign upon appointment.
4. Church of England clergy swear an Oath of Allegiance to the sovereign upon ordination and at all subsequent licensing and instalment.
5. All sittings of both Houses of the Parliament are opened with prayer.
6. Archbishops and bishops of the five ‘great sees’ (Canterbury, York, London, Durham, Winchester, and Bath and Wells) and the next 21 most senior bishops<sup>59</sup> sit in the House of Lords *ex officio*, making up the 26 ‘Lords Spiritual’ in total. Though non-partisan in essence, they sit on the government’s side of the House, to the right of the throne. Unique in the whole House, the end of their benches are distinguished by a single armrest.
7. Senior members of the clergy take precedence in the official order of precedence in England. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Bishop of London become privy councillors upon appointment.
8. Canons and Measures of the General Synod have legal status within the laws of England.

Points 3 and 4 cannot be understood as ‘privileges’, since the Prime Minister also makes other ministerial appointments, and anyone can swear an Oath of Allegiance at any time<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> Church of England Information Office. Church and state: report of the Archbishops' Commission 1970. (London: Church Information Office, 1985). 1. Referred to as the ‘Chadwick Report’ hereafter.

<sup>58</sup> Garbett. *Church and State*. 142f.

<sup>59</sup> Seniority determined by length of service as *diocesan* bishop.

<sup>60</sup> They were afforded an opportunity to do so in the coronation service, for example.

Furthermore, points 5 and 8 also cannot be counted as ‘privileges’ since the Church technically gets no material or political gains out of them, in fact, point 8 has frequently caused more trouble than what it is worth for the Church; other points of privileges will be addressed later.

The Church of England has been conscious of her unique position in the polity of England since her conception; perhaps oblivious to her critics and dissenters, she too has never stopped asking the question of whether she should be disestablished or not.<sup>61</sup> For example, in addition to the comments made by Figgis in the previous section, in 1929, the Bishop of Durham Hensley Henson wrote: ‘the Establishment as it now exists is morally discredited beyond recovery. It cannot permanently continue,’<sup>62</sup> elsewhere he also wrote: ‘in the circumstances of our modern world, national establishment is for Christianity unwholesome and potentially destructive.’<sup>63</sup>

Peter Cornwell, sometime Vicar of the University Church of St Mary the Virgin in Oxford, saw establishment as the Church leaning ‘upon the broken reed of the state connection’ which ‘prevents [the Church] from engaging in the real task of digging to that rock of the gospel’.<sup>64</sup> There were also critics from other denominations, such as Daniel Jenkins, a URC minister and a Welsh dissenter, who castigated the Church for succumbing to the ‘temptations of enterprise’ and being ‘more interested in herself as an institution than she is in England.’<sup>65</sup>

Critics of the Church of England’s establishment have often used the cultural context of modern England as a reason for disestablishment. As Lord Lester of Herne Hill said in a House of Lords debate in 2002:<sup>66</sup>

The archaic obscurity of our tangled constitutional arrangements undermines the notion of equal citizenship and a collective understanding of the core civic and political values of a plural society.

[...] Disestablishment would make it easier to promote racial and religious equality in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance and respect for human rights, and to promote a common and collective sense of what British citizenship entails.

The modern search for the Church’s essence resulted in opportunities for her ideals to transcend mere English expressions; her political character can no longer be the centre of her ecclesial identity, and the expansion of the Church’s new social roles coincided with her quest for an

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<sup>61</sup> Since 1991, there has been a ‘Working party on disestablishment’ established by the Ecclesiastical Law Society.

<sup>62</sup> Henson, H. ‘Disestablishment by consent’ In *Nineteenth Century and After* 105 (1929), 44–58. Here 58.

<sup>63</sup> Henson, H. *Bishoprick Papers*. (Oxford: OUP, 1946). 47.

<sup>64</sup> Cornwell, P. *Church and Nation*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983)54.

<sup>65</sup> Jenkins, D. *The British: their identity and their religion*. (London: SCM, 1975). 66ff.

<sup>66</sup> Lord Lester of Herne Hill. *Lords Hansard*. Vol. 635, col 786 (22 May 2002).

Anglican integrity that balances both her commitments to the society she operates in and the Gospel she is commanded to preach.<sup>67</sup>

### 2.3 What is mission, and how is that understood by the Church of England today?

A theological exploration of the Church's mission is necessary for us to understand what she is trying to achieve in her national mission.

In modern times,<sup>68</sup> the Church of England's mission can be seen as a particular expression of the Universal Church's mission in 'that portion of the Western Church which the Most High planted in England'<sup>69</sup>. She joins her ecumenical partners in carrying out 'God's purposeful activity in the world' in England and beyond by being immersed in the 'overflowing of God's being and nature' — the *missio dei* — the mission of God *and* mission *belonging* to God;<sup>70</sup> for Christians, this *missio dei* found its unsurpassable expression in the person that is Jesus Christ himself.<sup>71</sup>

In emulating the life and works of Jesus, the Church seeks to respond as faithfully as possible to the commission that came from him—'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you' (Matthew 28: 19-20a); the Church's existence is itself the fruit of God's mission, her participation in this mission is itself a gift from God, and her people are the agents of this mission in every age.<sup>72</sup>

Her missional activities are not confined to mere acts of evangelism—feeding the hungry, caring for the sick and suffering, working for social justice through active involvement in the political life of the nation and so on, are inseparable parts of this 'mission'. These are articulated in the 'Five Marks of Mission' as proposed by the Anglican Consultative Council in 1990 and adopted by the General Synod in 1996,<sup>73</sup> in which the worldwide Anglican Church's mission is defined as:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom,
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers,
3. To respond to human need by loving service,
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation,

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<sup>67</sup> Sachs, W. L. *The transformation of Anglicanism: from state church to global communion*. (Cambridge: CUP, 2002). 31.

<sup>68</sup> It is beyond the scope to trace how the Church of England's attitude to mission, especially in ecumenical contexts, has evolved through history. I here present the more recent understanding of the Church's mission as detailed in several publications issued in the past two decades. For a brief account of the development of the Church in England's mission, see Davie, M. *A guide to the Church of England*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2016). 207ff.

<sup>69</sup> Brooke, Z. N. *The English Church and the Papacy*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970). 21.

<sup>70</sup> Avis, P. *A ministry shaped by mission*. (London: T&T Clark, 2005). 5.

<sup>71</sup> *An Anglican-Methodist Covenant*. (London: Church House Publishing, 2001). 29.

<sup>72</sup> Archbishops' Council. *Mission-shaped Church: church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context*. (London: Church House Publishing, 2004). xii.

<sup>73</sup> Davie, M. *A guide to the Church of England*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2016). 204f.

5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

We can see that there is a balance of evangelism and concern for justice and human welfare, and that both foci stem from the biblical revelation as received by the Church.<sup>74</sup> How these marks of mission play out in reality will be expounded in the next chapter when I consider the mission of the Church of England today.

## 2.4 What would disestablishment look like?

It will be expedient to outline here briefly the procedures necessary to effect disestablishment in England, so that I can better frame the discussion on the mission of the Church of England within the current practice of establishment. The possible effects of disestablishment on the mission of the Church will be discussed later in chapter 4.

It must be emphasised that the Church's establishment is first and foremost a legal matter, and so disestablishment must be approached from the point of view of the English legal system.

The United Kingdom has no written constitution; the British Parliament has no formal limit to its powers.<sup>75</sup> Hence, the legal disentanglement of the relationship between the state and the Church, which we call 'disestablishment', is theoretically possible, though necessarily complex, not least in that the church will have to directly confront the gargantuan issue of disendowment.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, the Church cannot disestablish herself in practice—she can only request to be disestablished.<sup>77</sup> To do so, the legislative committee of the General Synod will have to introduce a Measure to the General Synod for debate, which, if it achieves the required majority, will be passed to the Parliament, which will treat it as any other primary legislation for debate and approval.<sup>78</sup> If the Measure passes the Parliament, it will be presented to the Monarch to be given Royal Assent. The effect of disestablishment will rely solely on the agreed terms in the Measure; the removal of Lords Spiritual from the House of Lords will require separate legislation since it technically falls within the ongoing process of reforming the House of Lords. Moreover, disestablishment does not automatically guarantee the Church's immediate and complete independence in self-governance; for example, in France, papal appointments are still vetted by a French Minister today.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Carey, G. 'The way ahead: preparing the Church of England for the New Millennium', The Ashe Lecture 1997. <<https://www.anglicannews.org/news/1997/10/the-way-ahead-preparing-the-church-of-england-for-the-new-millennium.aspx>>. Retrieved 29 May 2023.

<sup>75</sup> Baron Habgood of Calverton. *Lords Hansard*. Vol. 635, col 781 (22 May 2002).

<sup>76</sup> The returning of properties and other assets acquired or given to the Church from the state through the history of the establishment, such as those gained through Queen Anne's Bounty. See footnote 48 above.

<sup>77</sup> Church Assembly. *Church and State – Report of the Archbishops' Commission on the Relations between Church and State Volume 2*. (London: Church Assembly, 1935). 50. Referred to as 'The Cecil Committee' hereafter.

<sup>78</sup> Synodical Government Measure 1969. Measures 8 & 9 Eliz. 2 C2.

<sup>79</sup> Triandafyllidou & Magazzini, (eds.). *Routledge Handbook*. 27. The effect of *Laïcité* will be discussed in chapter 3.4.2.

With regard to the relationship between the Church and the Monarch, the matter is more complicated, since the Archbishop of Canterbury's role in the coronation<sup>80</sup> and the Monarch's authority as the Supreme Governor are enshrined in law,<sup>81</sup> hence these will also require separate legislation. To make the matter even more delicate, it has been pointed out that any attempt to disestablish the Church which does not originate from the Monarch themselves may constitute an act of Treason, since it can be interpreted as challenging the Monarch's authority and constitutional position.<sup>82</sup>

Sir William Fittall, secretary general of the General Synod from 2002 to 2015, said this of disestablishment:

At the risk of gross oversimplification, establishment, at whichever level one views it, has evolved to the point where it is now an almost wholly symbolic issue.

[...] To say that establishment is now a largely symbolic issue is not, however, the same as saying that it does not matter. The continuation of the monarchy is also largely a symbolic issue yet few would argue that we would not become a rather different country if we decided to become a republic.<sup>83</sup>

In the next chapter, the missional activities of the Church will be examined; I will seek to demonstrate how the Church utilises her existing connections, which she gained through her establishment, to fulfil her missionary goals. Then I will be in a place to comment on the significance of establishment to the Church's mission, and reconsider the value of this 'symbolic issue' in English society today.

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<sup>80</sup> Coronation Oath Act 1688. 1 Will & Mar. C1.

<sup>81</sup> Bill of Rights 1688. 1 Will & Mar Sess. 2 C2.

<sup>82</sup> *The Law Commission Codification of the Criminal Law: Treason, Sedition and Allied Offences (1977) Working Paper No. 72*. (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1978). 9. See also (1798) 27 St. Tr. 255, 387.

<sup>83</sup> Fittall. 'The Practice and Politics of Establishment'. 343.

### 3 'A Christian presence in every community'<sup>84</sup>—The Church of England's *national Mission*

The Church of England, since the Elizabethan settlement, has aspired to be a church for everyone.<sup>85</sup> The General Synod's most recent document on the Church's 'Vision and Strategy' reiterated the Church's commitment to her 'historic vocation' to be 'the Church for everyone everywhere, paying attention to the different ways and the different places in which people actually live.'<sup>86</sup> She does so chiefly through ministering to the nation through her extensive parish network, in all geographical settings—urban, suburban, and rural.<sup>87</sup> Michael Turnbull, sometime Bishop of Durham, said this in the House of Lords about the parochial structure of the Church:<sup>88</sup>

It is the national ministry of the Church of England 'by law established' that makes her role possible. Through the dioceses and parishes, through a small army of clergy and licensed lay ministers, through church schools and chaplaincies [...] the Church of England has a vast constituency of pastoral contact which extends far beyond the core of committed churchgoers. The expression 'national church' is not an anachronism.

The fact that the parochial clergy, their volunteers, and the physical buildings of the church are in the heart of the community they serve adds to the effectiveness of this support, embodying a model of Incarnational ministry that does not count the cost. As the Chadwick Report stressed, '[t]he Church of England is committed, by its history, its name, and its heritage, to a national mission.'<sup>89</sup>

At the heart of the Church's parish system is the concept of the *Cure of Souls*.<sup>90</sup> While it is not unique to the Church of England, she is the only ecclesiastical entity in England that extends the understanding of her 'cure' to *everyone* who resides within the physical boundaries of a parish, regardless of faith.<sup>91</sup> Indeed, her minister must be ready to minister to all upon their licensing;<sup>92</sup> the Church offers spiritual support to everyone, regardless of their beliefs, often in partnership with many of the UK's other religious communities (this will be discussed further in the

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<sup>84</sup> Motto as seen at the entrance to Church House, Westminster, the Headquarters of the Church of England.

<sup>85</sup> Nye, W. 'The Church of England: Some Personal Reflections on Structure and Mission'. In *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 23 (2021). 191-208. Here 192.

<sup>86</sup> Church of England. GS2238 'Vision and Strategy'. §10. <<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/GS%202238%20Vision%20and%20Strategy%20Update.pdf>>. Retrieved 2 Jun 2023.

<sup>87</sup> Noyes, J. & P. Blond. 'Holistic Mission: Social Action and the Church of England'. ResPublica. July 2013. <[https://www.respublica.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/mfp\\_ResPublica-Holistic-Mission-FULL-REPORT-10July2013.pdf](https://www.respublica.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/mfp_ResPublica-Holistic-Mission-FULL-REPORT-10July2013.pdf)>. 15-17.

<sup>88</sup> The Lord Bishop of Durham. *Lords Hansard*. Vol 345, col 931 (7 Mar 2000).

<sup>89</sup> Chadwick Report. 14.

<sup>90</sup> 'Cure' hereafter.

<sup>91</sup> Contrasting other denominations in England such as Methodism or Roman Catholicism.

<sup>92</sup> Garbett. *Church and State*. 130.



chaplaincy section later). This commitment is enshrined in the canon<sup>93</sup> and the laws of the State.<sup>94</sup> Thus the ‘cure’ can be seen as the most concrete expression of the Church of England’s establishment—both legally and visibly.<sup>95</sup>

In the space below, I will use the Five Marks of Mission<sup>96</sup> to structure my analysis of how the Church uses the resources and networks she gained through the constitutional history of this country and her established status to carry out her mission.<sup>97</sup>

### 3.1 ‘To teach, baptise and nurture new believers’ (second Mark of Mission)

#### 3.1.1 Public Worship and Pastoral Services

From her inception, the reformed Church of England has conducted Christian worship intended for the English masses; one of the Book of Common Prayer’s *raison d’être* is to allow all to worship in a language they understand. This principle can still be seen in the more recent liturgical revisions and provision of the Church, such as Common Worship, whose design continues to reflect the belief that worship itself is a pilgrimage, and that through offering accessible, dignified, and well-planned services, the Church invites all to journey into the heart of the love of God.<sup>98</sup>

Although only an average of 605,000 people (1% of the population) attended Sunday and midweek services in 2021, which means that the Church has lost over half her congregants in mere 6 years,<sup>99</sup> yet, as the statistics shows below, the Church still plays an important role in facilitating and marking the *rite du passage* of many.

In 2021, there were 55,200 baptisms or thanksgiving services for a child; of the total of 219,850 marriages celebrated in England and Wales that year, 26,500 marriages were celebrated by the

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<sup>93</sup> Canon C24.

<sup>94</sup> Eg The right to be buried with or without religious service within a churchyard is protected by Burial Laws Amendment Act 1880. 43 & 44 Vict. C41.

<sup>95</sup> Lord Pilkington of Oxenford. *Lords Hansard*. Vol. 635, col 785 (22 May 2002). In comparison, the cure of souls is largely absent in the canons of The Episcopal Church in America (TEC) and The Church in Wales (CiW) (they exist in their canons as a residue of the English understanding, but now only as a qualifier for the bishop or clergy’s legal rights. For TEC see Canon III.12, for CiW see Canon 37.7); it exists in the canons of the Scottish Episcopal Church (Canon 7.3) as a paraphrase of canon C24.6 of the Church of England.

<sup>96</sup> See §2.3.

<sup>97</sup> Due to the constraint of space, I cannot detail the work done by the Church on the fifth mark of mission within this analysis — ‘To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth,’ — however, there is evidence of her work in this mark of mission, eg the Church is both advocating for and actively tackling climate change through ethical investment and reducing carbon emission. See: Church of England. ‘GS 2258 Routemap to Net Zero Carbon by 2030 - Carbon Reduction Action Plan: A Supporting Paper from the Environment Working Group’. <<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/GS%202258%20Routemap%20to%20Net%20Zero%20Carbon.pdf>>. and ‘The Church of England Routemap to Net Zero Carbon by 2030’. Jun 2022. <[https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/nzc\\_2030\\_routemap\\_june22.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/nzc_2030_routemap_june22.pdf)>. Both retrieved 20 May 2023.

<sup>98</sup> *Common Worship*. (London: Church House Publishing, 2000). ix.

<sup>99</sup> Compared with data from: Church of England. ‘Statistics for Mission 2015’ (London: Research and Statistics-Church House, 2016) <<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Statistics%20for%20Mission%202015.pdf>>. Retrieved 9 Mar 2023.

Church of England,<sup>100</sup> making the Church the biggest provider of religious marriage ceremonies in England.<sup>101</sup> According to statistics, the Church also remains England's biggest provider of funerals.<sup>102</sup>

The Church continue to support practically, spiritually, and pastorally all who call upon them at moments of heightened emotion—of joy and celebration in baptisms and weddings, or of grief in funerals; the access to the Church's support in these occasions is subject to minimal restrictions, and the canons require the minister of the parish to provide sufficient and satisfactory reasons to deny anyone access to the above Sacraments.<sup>103</sup> The fact that most people who attend these services do not normally worship at their parish church, but merely live locally, is a reminder that the Church exists for the worshipping community *and* the community beyond the four walls of the Church.

### 3.1.2 Church of England Schools

Since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Church has become central to English society's overall operation. Through her substantial parish structure and voluntary societies (eg SPCK), it opened schools, especially charity schools, for the poor children of the day.<sup>104</sup> By 1840, the Church single-handedly raised the literacy rate of England to about 70% through her Sunday school provisions, 30 years before the state formally took responsibility for education.<sup>105</sup>

Today, the Church's programme of education continues to reflect not merely a deeply Christian vision for how her schools develop, but a vision of education that is generous, which seeks to 'enthuse and inspire', through allowing all children of all faiths or none to flourish through their schooling which is founded upon Christian principles.<sup>106</sup> As such, the Church's educational policies are shaped with the intention to draw everyone into working for the common good and not simply imposing Christian ideals on them.<sup>107</sup>

With over 4600 schools, educating more than a million children every day, over a quarter of the primary schools in England are Anglican. When combined with the statistics for academies and high schools, this makes the Church the biggest provider of education facilities in England.

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<sup>100</sup> Including services of prayer and dedication after civil marriage. See: Church of England. 'Statistics for Mission 2021 published'.

<sup>101</sup> The Church of England. 'Statistics for Mission 2021 published'. 06 Dec 2022. <<https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/statistics-mission-2021-published>>. Retrieved 30 Jan 2023.

<sup>102</sup> Church Support Hubs. Funerals. <<https://churchsupporthub.org/funerals/>>. Retrieved 30 Jan 2023.

<sup>103</sup> Except in the Sacrament of Holy Orders and Holy Matrimony which no person can claim automatic right to receive. See *The Principles of Canon Law: Common to the Churches of the Anglican Communion*. (London: Anglican Consultative Council, 2022). §32.3 & 71.

<sup>104</sup> Sachs, William L.. *The transformation of Anglicanism: from state church to global communion*. (Cambridge: CUP, 2002). 22.

<sup>105</sup> Spencer, N. 'Corrupt it? We invented it'. *The Guardian*. 9 Mar 2009. <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2009/mar/09/religion-charitable-giving>>. Retrieved 5 Jun 2023.

<sup>106</sup> The Church of England Education Office. 'Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, serving the common good'. 1. Autumn 2016. <[https://cofefoundation.contentfiles.net/media/assets/file/Church\\_of\\_England\\_Vision\\_for\\_Education\\_-\\_2016\\_jdYA7EO.pdf](https://cofefoundation.contentfiles.net/media/assets/file/Church_of_England_Vision_for_Education_-_2016_jdYA7EO.pdf)>. Retrieved 3 Jun 2023.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

More than a quarter of the population alive today in England received their education from a Church of England school.<sup>108</sup>

### **3.2 ‘To respond to human need by loving service’ (third Mark of Mission)—the Church’s pastoral ministry within public institutions**

The Church of England’s role stretches further than constitutional principles—she takes a leading part in a range of spheres, both religious and secular. The Church operates, beyond her parish system, in a wide range of contexts. Through her established status, she has developed and sustained a prevalent network devoted to the holistic pastoral care of the nation and her people, often within interfaith and multicultural contexts.<sup>109</sup>

#### **3.2.1 Chaplaincies<sup>110</sup>**

##### **Prisons and Probation Service**

It has been a statutory requirement for every prison in England to have at least one Anglican chaplain for over 70 years.<sup>111</sup> Prison chaplains provide essential pastoral care to both prisoners and staff across the country. Their services make a difference in the lives of those under their care, and through the interventions and programmes they offer, keep people both inside and outside the prison safe.<sup>112</sup> They also work with the families of the prisoners and support them during challenging times.

Anglican prison chaplains are called to be a compassionate and non-judgmental presence within the prison environment; they help prisoners find hope, meaning, and purpose in their lives, regardless of their circumstances, and they do so by collaborating with chaplains and agencies of other faiths.

The Church’s prison chaplaincy framework is set in partnership with HM Prison and Probation Service, whose official policies recognise the significance of faith as a ‘positive factor that

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<sup>108</sup> The Church of England. ‘Church schools and academies.’ <<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/>>. Retrieved 23 Feb 2023. On the other hand, The Roman Catholic Education Service runs 2090 schools with just over 842, 000 students. See Catholic Education Service. *CES Census 2022*. <<https://cescensus.org.uk/downloads/CensusDigestEngland2022.pdf>>. Retrieved 1 Mar 2023.

<sup>109</sup> The Church of England. ‘GS Misc 1004 House of Lords Reform.’ <[https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/gsmisc%201004%20-%20house%20of%20lords%20reform\\_Feb12.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/gsmisc%201004%20-%20house%20of%20lords%20reform_Feb12.pdf)>. §42. Retrieved 19 Feb 2023.

<sup>110</sup> For a comprehensive overview of the Church’s chaplaincy ministry and the theological rationale behind it see: Todd, A, Slater, V. & S. Dunlop. ‘The Church of England’s Involvement in Chaplaincy: Research Report for The Mission and Public Affairs Council’ <<https://orca.cardiff.ac.uk/id/eprint/62257/1/Todd,%20Slater%20&%20Dunlop%202014%20Report%20on%20Church%20of%20England%20Chaplaincy.pdf>>.

There are many more forms of chaplaincies which the Church of England is involved in, such as sports chaplaincy, theatre chaplaincy, and airport chaplaincy. See: Sports Chaplaincy. n.d. <<https://sportschaplaincy.org.uk/>>; Theatre chaplaincy. n.d. <<https://theatrechaplaincyuk.com/>>; Manchester Airport Chaplaincy. n.d. <<https://www.thechaplaincy-manchesterairport.co.uk/>>. For sports chaplaincy within Anglican theological education framework, see also: ‘Specialise in sports ministry’. Ridley Hall. n.d. <<https://www.ridley.cam.ac.uk/lay-ministry-old/your-calling/sports-ministry>>. All retrieved 6 Jun 2023.

<sup>111</sup> 15 & 16 Geo. 6, and 1 Eliz. 2 C.52.

<sup>112</sup> HM Prison & Probation Service. *Framework for Anglican Prison Chaplaincy*. 2021 <[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1008040/Framework\\_for\\_Anglican\\_Prison\\_Chaplaincy\\_2021-24.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1008040/Framework_for_Anglican_Prison_Chaplaincy_2021-24.pdf)>. 4ff. Retrieved 20 Feb 2023.

contributes to wellbeing and desistence' during a prisoner's sentence and beyond,<sup>113</sup> this effect on the prisoners' life is supported by further research done by The University of Cambridge.<sup>114</sup>

The Church's approach to prison chaplaincy is more collaborative than her Roman Catholic counterpart in England, as is evident in the most recent Synod motion on 'the contribution of Faith to the Rehabilitation of Offenders',<sup>115</sup> compared to the Roman Catholic's documents on prison chaplaincy which make no mention of working with other faith groups within the prison environment.<sup>116</sup>

## Healthcare Chaplaincies

In 2012, the Church of England provided 595 full-time<sup>117</sup> and more than 1,500 part-time healthcare chaplains<sup>118</sup>—more than half the nation's healthcare chaplains in total. Mirroring the ministry of a parish priest, they offer care to those who are experiencing the most profound moments in their lives—from the birth of a child to the death of a patient and anything in between, such as receiving the diagnosis of a life-threatening condition or going through an acute mental health crisis—moments when people's hopes are high, for whom the feeling of uncertainty and fear is intensified. Chaplains are called to support them through these life-changing circumstances.<sup>119</sup>

The importance of spiritual care provision for a person in illness is recognised by the National Health Service (NHS), and the Church's contribution forms a crucial part of the NHS' effort to ensure the holistic well-being of all under its care.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> HM Prison and Probation Service. 'National Partnership Framework with Faith based communities (including Prison Chaplaincy)'. 5. Oct 2020. <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-partnership-framework>>. Retrieved 3 Jun 2023.

<sup>114</sup> Community Chaplaincy Association. 'Research into the Community Chaplaincy approach'. n.d. <<https://communitychaplaincy.org.uk/community-chaplaincy/research-our-work>>. Retrieved 3 June 2023.

<sup>115</sup> The Church of England. 'GS 2294A The contribution of Faith to the Rehabilitation of Offenders'. <<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/GS%202294A%20Prisoner%20Rehabilitation.pdf>>. Retrieved 30 Jan 2023.

<sup>116</sup> The Catholic Church Bishop's Conference of England and Wales. *Prisons*. <<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/category/cbcew/prisons/>>. Retrieved 20 Jun 2023.

<sup>117</sup> Todd, Slater, & Dunlop. 'The Church of England's Involvement in Chaplaincy'. 14. Retrieved 4 Jun 2023.

<sup>118</sup> The Church of England. 'Hospital chaplaincy'. n.d. <<https://www.churchofengland.org/hospital-chaplaincy>>. Retrieved 4 Jun 2023.

<sup>119</sup> National Health Service. 'Promoting Excellence in Pastoral, Spiritual and Religious Care'. <<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/nhs-chaplaincy-guidelines-2015.pdf>>. 5.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. 5f.

## Armed forces

Founded in 1796, The Army Chaplain's Department is one of the oldest chaplaincy in England.<sup>121</sup> Subsequently, the Church of England also formally provided chaplains to the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force in 1859 and 1918 respectively. In total, 286 Anglican chaplains are serving in the three branches of the armed forces, making up more than 61% of all military chaplains.<sup>122</sup>

As non-combatant members, chaplains minister to the members of the armed forces both in times of peace and war.<sup>123</sup> They minister to both active personnel and veterans, and the scope of their ministry evolves with the ever-changing demands made on the armed forces by the State's political decisions.<sup>124</sup>

More recently, chaplains of the British Army have been involved in the training of military chaplains for the Ukrainian armed forces, sharing with the Ukrainian chaplains the resources they have built up over the years in active service and their experience of pastoral and spiritual care within the operational context.<sup>125</sup>

### 3.3.2 Responding to the needs of the nation and beyond

In the past, the Church has had fruitful cooperation with other denominations in England in organising aid agencies, both at the national and international level, such as Save the Children Fund, Oxfam, and Christian Aid.<sup>126</sup> Today, the Church continues to exercise her ministry in collaboration with other organisations, religious and secular. For example, from the city-centre parish of Little Saint Mary's in Cambridge to St Mary's Parish Church in the Pennine market town of Mirfield in West Yorkshire, numerous Church of England churches have participated in the 'Warm Welcome' scheme,<sup>127</sup> forming part of the Church's national response to the wider issue of the ongoing cost of living crisis.<sup>128</sup> According to the Sunday Telegraph, members of the

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<sup>121</sup> The British Army. 'Who we are: royal army chaplains' department'. <<https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/corps-regiments-and-units/royal-army-chaplains-department/>>. Retrieved 6 Jun 2023.

<sup>122</sup> The Church of England. 'GS1776 Presentation on Military Chaplaincy.' *passim*. Feb 2010 <<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/gS1776-military%20chaplaincy.pdf>>. Retrieved 6 Jun 2023.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>124</sup> The Church of England. 'GS1960 The Church and the Armed Forces Covenant: A report by the Mission and Public Affairs Council'. July 2014. <[https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/gS1960%20-%20the%20church%20and%20the%20armed%20forces%20covenant\\_July14.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/gS1960%20-%20the%20church%20and%20the%20armed%20forces%20covenant_July14.pdf)>. *passim*. Retrieved 4 Jun 2023.

<sup>125</sup> GOV.UK. 'Ukrainian military chaplains receive training from British Army.' 5 Jun 2023. <<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ukrainian-military-chaplains-receive-training-from-british-army>>. Retrieved 20 Jun 2023.

<sup>126</sup> Rodger, T., Williamson, P., & M. Grimley. (Eds) *The church of England and British politics since 1900* in *Studies in Modern British Religious History Volume 41*. (Cambridge: Boydell Press, 2020). 11.

<sup>127</sup> Warm Welcome. n.d. <<https://www.warmwelcome.uk/>>. Retrieved 6 Jun 2023.

<sup>128</sup> The Church of England. 'GS 2287 A briefing paper on the cost of living crisis: public policy and community impact'. <<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/GS%202287%20Cost%20of%20Living%20.pdf>>. Retrieved 30 Jan 2023.

Church of England gave 22.3 million hours each month in voluntary service in 2012,<sup>129</sup> if that figure remained roughly the same, it would equal the Church's members contributing a fifth of the total hours devoted to voluntary service in England in 2019.<sup>130</sup>

The character of the Church in local social action has been remarked as 'hyper-local' and 'diverse'—stemming from the 'principle of grassroots organisation' of professional and personal involvement in the life of the community.<sup>131</sup> The local church, due to her location and history within the community, often becomes the locus for the community and its social action.

Another example of the parish's ability to facilitate social action at both a local and national level is the voluntary work done by St Chrysostom's Church, Manchester. The weekly English Class for victims of human trafficking helped over 400 people in the course of 4 years; it was estimated that among those 400, 50 were from Vietnam<sup>132</sup> — a third of all Vietnamese victims trafficked to the UK that year.<sup>133</sup> Volunteers were made up of a wide range of people of different cultural backgrounds to beliefs—from Roman Catholic nuns to students from the Manchester Grammar School<sup>134</sup>—once again exemplifying how the Church draws a wide range of people in to share her ministry and connect people within the local community.

Beyond teaching English, the church provided these victims of human trafficking with a safe place of welcome where they can rebuild trust in other people, accompanied them to court hearings, and arranged accommodation for them in collaboration with other local charities. The value of this social outreach was brought to the fore when the church held a prayer vigil for the 39 Vietnamese people who died of suffocation on their journey to Britain in a shipping container.<sup>135</sup> The vigil was attended by the local Councillor, the Member of Parliament, the Worldwide President of the Mother's Union, and more importantly, the Vietnamese victims the Church were already serving.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Moreton, C. 'What has the Church of England ever done for us?' *Sunday Telegraph*. 23 Dec 2012. <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/9762642/What-has-the-Church-of-England-ever-done-for-us.html>>. Also: Church of England. 'Managing volunteers'. n.d. <<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/community-action/managing-volunteers>>. Retrieved 5 Jun 2023.

<sup>130</sup> Hargrave, R. 'Total number of formal volunteering hours down by 40 per cent last year, figures show'. *Third Sector*. <<https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/total-number-formal-volunteering-hours-down-40-per-cent-last-year-figures-show/volunteering/article/1789898>>. Retrieved 6 Jun 2023.

<sup>131</sup> Noyes, J. & P. Blond. 'Holistic Mission: Social Action and the Church of England'. ResPublica. July 2013. <[https://www.respublica.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/mfp\\_ResPublica-Holistic-Mission-FULL-REPORT-10July2013.pdf](https://www.respublica.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/mfp_ResPublica-Holistic-Mission-FULL-REPORT-10July2013.pdf)>. 13. Retrieved 4 Jun 2023.

<sup>132</sup> St Chrysostom's Church. '39 candles for trafficking victims'. St Chrysostom's Church News and Views. 8 Nov 2019. <<https://stchrysostoms.wordpress.com/2019/11/08/39-candles-for-trafficking-victims/>>. Retrieved 5 Jun 2023.

<sup>133</sup> Home Office. 'Country Policy and Information Note Vietnam: Victims of trafficking'. Apr 2020. <[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/880558/Vietnam\\_-\\_Trafficking\\_-\\_CPIN\\_-\\_v4.0\\_April\\_2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/880558/Vietnam_-_Trafficking_-_CPIN_-_v4.0_April_2020.pdf)>. §2.4.5. Retrieved 5 Jun 2023.

<sup>134</sup> St Chrysostom's Church. 'Pioneering support at Church for the trafficked'. St Chrysostom's Church News and Views. 18 Oct 2019. <<https://stchrysostoms.wordpress.com/2019/10/18/pioneering-support-at-church-for-the-trafficked/>>. Retrieved 5 Jun 2023.

<sup>135</sup> Gentleman, A. 'Essex lorry deaths: 39 Vietnamese migrants suffocated in container, court hears'. *Guardian*. 7 Oct 2020. <<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/oct/07/essex-lorry-deaths-39-vietnamese-migrants-suffocated-in-container-court-hears>>. Retrieved 27 Jun 2023.

<sup>136</sup> St Chrysostom's Church. '39 candles for trafficking victims'. St Chrysostom's Church News and Views. 8 Nov 2019. <<https://stchrysostoms.wordpress.com/2019/11/08/39-candles-for-trafficking-victims/>>. Retrieved 5 Jun 2023.

The Church's social mission is ultimately indivisible from her spiritual mission;<sup>137</sup> through the channels beyond the parish detailed above, the Church seeks to build up inclusive communities and minister to those who are marginalised and disadvantaged, reaffirming and helping all to live out the 'national narrative of the social and common good'.<sup>138</sup>

### **3.4 'To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom' and 'To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation' (First and Fourth Mark of Mission)**

#### **3.4.1 Lords Spiritual's role in British politics**

It has been said that the Church's establishment had played a part in infusing a sense of higher calling in the administration of the English government, and had generally secured the freedom of its citizens and impressed upon them a mutual accountability which was measured against ideals that are ultimately beyond this world.<sup>139</sup>

Lords Spiritual have sat in the Lords since its inception.<sup>140</sup> The Church of England's bishops' involvement in the revision chamber of the Parliament brings philosophical, moral and spiritual considerations into debates and the conduct of public affairs,<sup>141</sup> offering important 'complements and counterpoints' to party-politically and economically driven deliberation in the chamber.<sup>142</sup> Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, saw the Lords Spiritual's contribution within the House thus:<sup>143</sup>

[...] in an era of growing interest and concern about relations between faiths, their approach to moral and ethical issues and their impact on the modern world, the House of Lords has considerable potential as a forum for serious and well-informed debate on these matters.

In 2002, John Gladwin, then Lord Bishop of Guildford, said this of his involvement in the House of Lords:<sup>144</sup>

When I come to the House [...] I bring with me my life and ministry as a bishop: a public ministry to one million people [...] My daily work, and that of a thousand clergy and laypeople is tending to the ties that bind our society together [...] a host of other

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<sup>137</sup> Noyes & Blond. 'Holistic Mission'. 9.

<sup>138</sup> The Church of England. 'GS1960 The Church and the Armed Forces Covenant'. §3.

<sup>139</sup> Sachs. *The transformation of Anglicanism*. 32.

<sup>140</sup> HM Government. 'The House of Lords: Reform'. (London: The Stationery Office, 2007). §6.22

<sup>141</sup> *A House for the Future: Royal Commission on the reform of the House of Lords. Cm 4534*. (Royal Commission, 2000). §15.9.

<sup>142</sup> Rodger, Williamson, & Grimley. (Eds) *The church of England*. 2.

<sup>143</sup> Response from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, on behalf of the Church of England, to the Consultation Document "Constitutional Reform: next steps for the House of Lords", December 2003. See Church of England. 'GS Misc 1004 House of Lords Reform.' <[https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/gs%20misc%201004%20-%20house%20of%20lords%20reform\\_Feb12.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/gs%20misc%201004%20-%20house%20of%20lords%20reform_Feb12.pdf)>. §44. Retrieved 19 Feb 2023.

<sup>144</sup> The Lord Bishop of Guildford. *Lords Hansard*. Vol 630, Cols 585-586. (9 January 2002).

global and local connections. Our ministry, which is a public trust, is open to all. That is the foundation of the historic role that the bishops have played in this House.

It is extremely rare for the bishops' votes to make a difference to the outcome of a vote, it has been noted that their political power is more of an influential nature than decisive.<sup>145</sup> In the past year, the Lords Spiritual have spoken at a variety of debates, especially in the more contentious bills such as the Illegal Immigration Bill and the Public Order Bill.<sup>146</sup> On one occasion, the Lord Bishop of Southwark delivered his speech on one of the amendments in the Illegal Immigration Bill, defending the rights and dignity of pregnant asylum seekers and vulnerable adults, past 2 am in the chamber.<sup>147</sup> Bishops bring with them years of experience from their involvement in various national structures, in offering pastoral care at all levels of the Church's organisation, and the vision and zeal for Christ-inspired justice and equitable governance in this land.

Despite the Church's limited ecclesiastical jurisdiction (ie within England only) and the overall decrease in Christian observance in the United Kingdom as a whole, the Church continues to exercise considerable influence in the British parliament and British politics.<sup>148</sup> In the Parliament, the bishops' contributions are 'consistently grounded in Christian values' which rise above partisan politics, *realpolitik* and denominational principles, as such, they attest to the reality that a balance of both practical and spiritual considerations is needed for the 'effective and just governance' of a nation;<sup>149</sup> the established Church ensures the political and value horizons of the society remain broad in general,<sup>150</sup> she serves to remind the state that its temporal power is not absolute,<sup>151</sup> and its moral authority has deeper and more permanent roots than the opinions of the government of the day, or even the will of the people.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> There are the odd occasions when the bishops' votes did change the course of a particular legislation, such as the support of the bishops received by Sir Robert Walpole. In 1780, there were 224 peers in the House of Lords, thus the 26 bishops made up more than a tenth of the chamber. For more instances when episcopal involvement in the House of Lords, see: Sykes, *Church and State*. 49ff.

<sup>146</sup> The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury. *Lords Hansard*. Vol 829, Col 1793. (10 May 2023), The Lord Bishop of Gloucester. *Lords Hansard*. Vol 829, Col 1845 (10 May 2023), and The Lord Bishop of Manchester, *Lords Hansard*. Vol 829. Col 137 (28 March 2023).

<sup>147</sup> The Lord Bishop of Southwark. *Lords Hansard*. Vol. 830, Col 1496. (7 Jun 2023).

<sup>148</sup> Rodger, Williamson, & Grimley. (Eds) *The church of England*. 224.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid*, 239.

<sup>150</sup> Modood, T. *Church, State and Religious Minorities*. (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1997). 8

<sup>151</sup> Baron Habgood of Calverton. *Lords Hansard*. Vol. 630, Col 780. (22 May 2002).

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, Col 782.



### 3.4.2 The Church of England in the public square

The late Trevor Huddleston CR, sometime Archbishop of the Indian Ocean and an anti-apartheid activist, argued that the Anglican Church in South Africa could be the prophetic voice against apartheid precisely because it was not an established church. However, Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher's involvement in shaping colonial policies in South Africa in the 1950s and his advocacy against racism and apartheid,<sup>153</sup> often in collaboration with secular groups, was possible only because of Fisher's position within the establishment.

In the past, senior clergy of the Church have used their unique positions and wide connections to facilitate reconciliation at the international level, at times going against the wishes of the government. For example, contrary to Margret Thatcher's demand for a service that is celebratory in tone, the late Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie's sermon at the service of thanksgiving for the conclusion of the Falklands campaign, preached at the cathedral of England's capital city, denounced 'those spectators who remained at home...who continued to be most violent in their attitudes and untouched in themselves,' together with his insistence on praying for the Argentinian soldiers who died in the war, his leadership showed the world a powerful example of how the Church, despite being established, upholds and promotes Christian ideals which transcend the national and political demands made on the established Church.<sup>154</sup>

More recently, an independent review by the Bishop of Truro for the support of persecuted Christians, commissioned by the Foreign Secretary and the then Foreign and Commonwealth Office, was used to form the basis of a resolution on 'Freedom of Religion or Belief' adopted by the United Nations.<sup>155</sup> This shows once again the unique positions of bishops—that they are able to connect with and gather information from communities within and without the country in ways that the State can never be able to emulate, both because they are closely related to the State but not *of* the State.

### 3.4.3 Interfaith dialogue and mutual support

In the pluralist society that is modern England, the Church can no longer claim a monopoly on the religious sphere of English society; she is no longer the 'common ecclesiastical authority

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<sup>153</sup> Stockwell, S. 'Splendidly Leading the Way?' Archbishop Fisher and Decolonisation in British Colonial Africa'. In *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* Vol. 36(3), September 2008, 545–564.

<sup>154</sup> Carpenter, H. *Robert Runcie: The reluctant Archbishop*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996). 258f.

<sup>155</sup> The Church of England. 'UN Security Council adopts Bishop's recommendations on Freedom of Religion or Belief'. 19 Jun 2023. <<https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/un-security-council-adopts-bishops-recommendations-freedom-religion>>. For the text of the review, see: Mountstephen, P. 'Bishop of Truro's Independent Review For The Foreign Secretary of FCO Support For Persecuted Christians: Final Report And Recommendations'. 2019. <<https://christianpersecutionreview.org.uk/storage/2019/07/final-report-and-recommendations.pdf>>. Both retrieved 26 Jun 2023.

presiding over the whole of human life', as the late Archbishop of York John Habgood put it.<sup>156</sup> The Church acknowledged this shift in Christianity's position in England in her church-planting report in 2004:<sup>157</sup>

Much of Britain's self-understanding comes from centuries of Christian faith, but many in Britain now have minimal knowledge of the Christian faith. The Christian story is no longer at the heart of the nation. Although people may identify themselves as 'Christian' in the national census, for the majority that does not involve belonging to a worshipping community, or any inclination that it should. Many people have no identifiable religious interest or expression.

In other words, the maxim *Cuius regio, eius religio* belongs to the distant past of English history, and the culture of the society is evolving to reflect this reality. For example, in early 2023, London School of Economics announced that they will change the naming of their academic terms. Starting from the academic year of 2023/2024, 'Michaelmas' and 'Lent' terms will be called 'Autumn' and 'Winter' terms, while Christmas and Easter breaks will be called 'Winter' and 'Spring' breaks, thus removing the link between the academic calendar and the Church's liturgical calendar.<sup>158</sup>

While it may seem logical on the surface that disestablishment will lead to greater religious equality, it is not the case for some countries like France, where the principle of *Laïcité* is upheld. Instead of seeing multiculturalism and faith groups flourish, *Laïcité* hardened the cultural discourse in France; it has evolved to impose upon the masses an ideological presumption of assimilationism and general disappearance of religion altogether,<sup>159</sup> descending into a 'programmatic secularism' which assumes any demonstration of any conviction is automatically offensive to people holding different convictions.<sup>160</sup> *Laïcité*, rather than securing the freedom of religion of French citizens, has developed into a kind of religious protectionism— by forcefully maintaining strict secularity in the public square through various legislation, sometimes against public expression of religiosity, *Laïcité* as practiced by the French state has in fact secured freedom *from* religion for her citizens.<sup>161</sup> Moreover, *Laïcité* in practice is often used in repressing French Muslims and nurturing islamophobia, while remaining lenient with Roman Catholics.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Gore, C. *Church and Society*. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1928). 152.

<sup>157</sup> *Mission Shaped Church*. (London: Church House Publishing, 2004). 11.

<sup>158</sup> London School of Economics. 'Updates to LSE's term names and SMC titles'. <<https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/Assets/articles/Updates-to-LSEs-term-names-and-SMC-titles/>>. Retrieved 30 Jan 2023.

<sup>159</sup> Triandafyllidou & Magazzini, (eds.). *Routledge Handbook*. 24ff.

<sup>160</sup> Williams, R. *Faith in the Public Square*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2012). 26.

<sup>161</sup> Triandafyllidou & Magazzini, (eds.). *Routledge Handbook*. 24ff.

<sup>162</sup> Jamal, T. 'The Weaponization of Laïcité Against Muslims: Pushing More Towards Extremism'. *Euro Crisis in the Press*. 15 Jun 2021. <<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/eurocrisispress/2021/06/15/weaponization-of-laicite/>>. Retrieved 24 Jun 2023.

Across the Atlantic, in the United States of America where the separation of Church and State is enshrined in the First Amendment, the State of Texas passed a law in 2021 to require all schools to display 'In God we trust' signs if they have been donated to the school.<sup>163</sup>

While both cases can be considered extreme, the lack of formal religious participation in the legislative process is undoubtedly one of the reasons behind the paradoxical situations we find in France and the United States — the former, though officially guarantees religious freedom, has in fact culled the expression of one's religious identity in public, and the latter, though legally the government must remain religiously-neutral, has aligned Christianity with patriotism.

On the other hand, in more recent years, the Church of England has been more conscious in her collaboration with her ecumenical and inter-faith partners in different fields of mission and securing fair religious representation in the public sphere. Habgood, speaking in the House of Lords, highlighted the Lords Spiritual's role in ensuring the voices of other faith groups are heard both within and outside of the chamber:

Nowadays, after a century of ecumenism and growing interfaith co-operation, they can do that in partnership with all religious traditions and can open the way for the interests of all to be represented at the highest level.<sup>164</sup>

An example of this is how Robert Runcie, as the Archbishop of Canterbury, advocated for a widening of the Blasphemy Act to include other religions (in particular Islam in the wake of the Rushdie Affair) and the acknowledgement of non-Christian faiths in the Education Reform Act.<sup>165</sup>

Sometimes it is assumed that other faith groups in England may look on the Church's establishment with envy and suspicion, however, the Church's establishment, especially her presence in the House of Lords, has found some support in other faith groups. The late Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks wrote:<sup>166</sup>

[The Church of England's] disestablishment would be a significant retreat from the notion that we share any values and beliefs at all. And that would be a path to more, not fewer, tensions. Establishment secures a central place for spirituality in the public square. This benefits all faiths, not just Christianity.

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<sup>163</sup> "S.B. No. 797. An Act relating to the display of the national motto in public schools and institutions of higher education." 25 May 2021. <<https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/87R/billtext/html/SB00797F.htm>>. See also: Paveley, R. 'Pro-Christian education laws proposed in Texas'. *Church Times*. 9 Jun 2023. <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2023/9-june/news/world/pro-christian-education-laws-proposed-in-texas>>. Both retrieved 9 Jun 2023.

<sup>164</sup> Baron Habgood of Calverton. *Lords Hansard*. Vol. 630, col 782. (22 May 2002).

<sup>165</sup> For more detailed analysis of interfaith relations during Runcie's archiepiscopate, see: Loss, D. 'Missionaries, the Monarchy, and the Emergence of Anglican Pluralism in the 1960s and 1970s'. In *Journal of British Studies* 57 (July 2018). 543–563. Here 546, & 560ff.

<sup>166</sup> Sacks, J. *The Persistence of Faith: Religion, Morality and Society in a Secular Age*. (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1991). 68. See also: Hill, M. 'Church and State in the United Kingdom: Anachronism or Microcosm?' in Ferrari, S. & R. Cristofori. *Law and Religion in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010). 199-209. Here 208.

According to Justin Welby, the current Archbishop of Canterbury, members of the Muslim community have also expressed their support for the establishment.<sup>167</sup>

It is true that this ‘duty’ of promoting religious freedom and ecumenism which stems from the establishment is a fragile means of maintaining the *status quo* of equality; the sustainability of this responsibility is a question the Church needs to explore further. However, the Church is not alone in being an instrument of tolerance in England and beyond, as the Monarch and State also share in this duty of ensuring and facilitating freedom of religion is preserved. In the next section, I will discuss how the Monarch, as both the head of State and the Supreme Governor of the Church, can be the symbol of unity which promotes religious tolerance and affirms the positive effects of diversity in British society.

### 3.5 The British Monarch’s role in promoting interfaith relations

As required by the Act of Settlement 1700, the British monarch must ‘join in communion with the Church of England as by law established’,<sup>168</sup> as well as maintaining the ‘rights and privileges of bishops and Clergy of [the Church] of England by law established’.<sup>169</sup> However, in more recent years, there has been a widening of the monarch’s personal recognition of the importance of other faith communities in their realm. For example, the Diamond Jubilee reception held at Lambeth Palace in 2012 was attended by representatives from no fewer than eight faith communities in addition to other ecumenical guests.<sup>170</sup> Far from the monarch asserting the religious ‘status quo’ of the nation, ie with the Church of England as the state Church, Queen Elizabeth II explicitly affirmed the importance of the ecumenical and interfaith nature of the society of which she is the head in the speech she gave in the reception:<sup>171</sup>

Here at Lambeth Palace we should remind ourselves of the significant position of the Church of England in our nation’s life. The concept of our established Church is occasionally misunderstood and, I believe, commonly under-appreciated. Its role is not to defend Anglicanism to the exclusion of other religions. Instead, the Church has a duty to protect the free practice of all faiths in this country.

[...] The Church of England has created an environment for other faith communities and indeed people of no faith to live freely. Woven into the fabric of this country, the Church has helped to build a better society — more and more in active co-operation for the common good with those of other faiths.

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<sup>167</sup> Binyon, M. ‘Justin Welby interview: Our colonial church, The Archbishop of Canterbury foresees his female successor’. *Prospect Magazine*. 17 Aug 2014. <<https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/opinions/46512/justin-welby-interview-our-colonial-church>>. Retrieved 2 Jun 2023.

<sup>168</sup> 12 & 13 Will. III C2 §3. Although being ‘in communion’ with the Church of England does not necessarily mean the Monarch needs to be a *member* of the Church of England. George I and II were both Lutherans.

<sup>169</sup> Coronation Oath Act 1688. Will. I & Mar. C6 §3. As adopted for Queen Elizabeth II’s Coronation Service in 1953.

<sup>170</sup> Loss, D. ‘Missionaries, the Monarchy, and the Emergence of Anglican Pluralism in the 1960s and 1970s’. In *Journal of British Studies* 57 (July 2018). 543–563. Here 544.

<sup>171</sup> ‘A speech by The Queen at Lambeth Palace, 2012’. *Royal*. 15 February 2012. <<https://www.royal.uk/queens-speech-lambeth-palace-15-february-2012>>. Accessed 30 May 2023.

Since the 1940s, the British monarchy has exhibited an openness to the accommodation of other religions throughout the Commonwealth which has not always been appreciated by the Church or the Christian population. Yet, the recognition of the value of the other faith groups in the United Kingdom given by George VI and Elizabeth II has laid a firm foundation for Charles III and the Church to continue their effort in recognising the place of other faiths in England and beyond.<sup>172</sup>

In 1970, the Chadwick report gave the following recommendation regarding the coronation of the future British monarch:<sup>173</sup>

We hope that other Churches will be brought, in a more formal way than hitherto, into the rite of coronation. The rite itself may need further substantial adaptation to meet the times, which we hope to be distant times.

Yet, in 1994, Prince Charles was criticised for expressing his wish to be the ‘Defender of Faith’ rather than the ‘Defender of *the* Faith’<sup>174</sup> upon his accession to the throne;<sup>175</sup> although he could not change the title given to him as the monarch of the United Kingdom, the design his coronation reflects this personal and institutional belief that the monarch’s special relationship with the Church of England no longer precludes the mutual flourishing of other religious presence in their realm—representatives from eight religions and five other denominations were present in the coronation, with the Moderator of the Church of Scotland presenting the King with the Bible, and four others taking part in the blessing of the new King.<sup>176</sup> Alongside his past engagements with other faith communities, the coronation rite attests to Charles III’s commitment to the vision for a truly pluralist society that is sincere and realistic, and not merely advocating a naïve and bland religious syncretism in the United Kingdom for the sake of political expediency.

### **3.5.1 Celebrating with the whole nation—the Church of England’s role in England’s public ceremonies**

There is a long history of Anglican clergy leading and sustaining the ceremonial life of the nation. This aspect of the establishment is particularly salient every year on Remembrance Day, when her clergy officiate at local memorials and services of commemoration throughout the

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<sup>172</sup> Loss, D. ‘Missionaries, the Monarchy, and the Emergence of Anglican Pluralism in the 1960s and 1970s’. In *Journal of British Studies* 57 (July 2018). 543–563. Here 548ff.

<sup>173</sup> Chadwick Report. 2f.

<sup>174</sup> Italics mine.

<sup>175</sup> Sherwood, H. ‘King Charles to be Defender of the Faith but also a defender of faiths’. *Guardian*. 9 Sep 2023. <[<sup>176</sup> The Church of England. ‘The authorised liturgy for the coronation rite of His Majesty King Charles III: For use on Saturday 6th May 2023, 11:00am at Westminster Abbey.’ <<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/23-24132%20Coronation%20Liturgy.pdf>>. Retrieved 20 Jun 2023. 6 & 26.](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/sep/09/king-charles-to-be-defender-of-the-faith-but-also-a-defender-of-faiths#:~:text=In%201994%2C%20Charles%20triggered%20controversy,coronation%20oath%20might%20be%20altered.></a>. Retrieved 20 Jun 2023.</p></div><div data-bbox=)

country, often facilitating other local organisations' participation in different acts of remembrance.

This aspect of the Church's involvement in the life of the nation has been made more obvious by three significant events in 2022 and 2023, when the United Kingdom celebrated Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee in June, leading the national mourning after her death in November, and in May 2023, the Coronation of King Charles III. The Church, who enjoys an intimate relationship with the monarchy, was active in the national celebrations of the Queen's life and the King's new reign. Cathedrals and churches across the country provided the local community with the space and liturgical resources<sup>177</sup> to mark the events.<sup>178</sup>

Lastly, as many around the world have noted, the coronation service's liturgy and music testify to the effort, resources, and dedication the Church has devoted to maintaining excellence in the choral and liturgical music tradition of England. This is another of the Church's service to the nation which is often overlooked—that beyond preserving historical buildings around the country, the Church has also invested a lot in keeping alive the intangible cultural heritage of English choral music which has echoed within the walls of many cathedrals and parish churches throughout history. A research has been conducted on the transformative and positive effects of attending a service of choral evensong—interviewees have reported that, during the service, they had found peace and a window to experience transcendence in the sanctuary that is the church.<sup>179</sup>

### 3.6 Summary

In 1982, Habgood argued that should the Church be disestablished, she will soon lose her sense of national duty, and the scope of her ministry will diminish in the long run.<sup>180</sup> Forty years after Habgood's primacy as the Archbishop of York, however, it seems that the opposite is true, that no revision of the laws of England could alter the Church's 'vocation to a national mission',<sup>181</sup> since, as we have seen above, she does not carry out her missionary work in the nation out of legal or political obligations, rather, her ministry to the nation is the result of her own volition and conviction. Moreover, it has been said that the governance of the Church, with the modernised system of General Synod and bishops appointments, the work of clergy at the local

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<sup>177</sup> The Church of England. 'Liturgical Resources for the celebration of 'The Queen's Platinum Jubilee'. <<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/PlatinumJubilee.pdf>>. Retrieved 9 Jun 2023.

<sup>178</sup> The Church of England. 'More than 1,000 events in cathedrals and churches to mark Queen's Platinum Jubilee'. 1 Jun 2022. <https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/more-1000-events-cathedrals-and-churches-mark-queens-platinum-jubilee>>. Retrieved 9 Jun 2023.

<sup>179</sup> King, K. *Tranquillity, transcendence, and retreat: the transformative practice of listening at Evensong*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 2022). Chapters 4-9. <[https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:0772a6ce-d68e-4356-af39-dfab545ee108/download\\_file?file\\_format=application%2Fpdf&safe\\_filename=King\\_2022\\_Tranquillity\\_transcendence\\_and.pdf&type\\_of\\_work=Thesis](https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:0772a6ce-d68e-4356-af39-dfab545ee108/download_file?file_format=application%2Fpdf&safe_filename=King_2022_Tranquillity_transcendence_and.pdf&type_of_work=Thesis)>. Retrieved 24 Jun 2023.

<sup>180</sup> Habgood, J. *Church and Nation in a secular age*. (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1982). 98.

<sup>181</sup> Chadwick Report. 14.

level would not change radically or seriously disrupted if the relationship with the State were to be severed.<sup>182</sup>

In the whole Anglican Communion, the Church of England is the only member Church that has an Established status within the polity of the territory they serve. So, arguably, the establishment is not essential to ‘Anglican’ mission or ecclesiology. Indeed, *Faith in the City*, a report commissioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Commission on Urban Priority Areas, only once mentions the works of the Lords Spiritual in the discussion of housing legislation in the upper chamber and it makes no mention of the established status of the Church of England and how she may use that status to achieve the recommendations the report has made.<sup>183</sup> Perhaps the 400-page long report was working on the assumption that the Church was still an integral part of the State, however, for a report of that scale, establishment clearly was not necessarily as powerful an instrument in effecting and influencing changes in governmental policies as many have thought.

The brief analysis of the Church’s mission above contradicts the claims of Chaplin—that the Church ‘fears’ disestablishment because it may create an ideological vacuum which will be filled by secularists and that it may cause the Church to retreat from indiscriminatory public ministry.<sup>184</sup> These arguments are in fact straw men in the disestablishment discourse, since neither of them comes close to reflecting the reality of the missional zeal the Church has for the nation and beyond, which is rooted deeply in a genuine care that does not count the cost.

Despite the social fabric of England has changed beyond recognition from the time when *Faith in the City* was written, what has remained constant is the people’s need for community and hope. The Church, through her missional activities I outlined above, aspires to be there for all in times of need, to nurture, to feed, to comfort, and to inspire. By insisting that access to her care requires no prior conditions of active or formal membership,<sup>185</sup> the Church fulfils a specific role in the nation’s life by providing *everyone* with pastoral care that is ‘holistic and tailored to people’s specific needs’;<sup>186</sup> she exercises her ministry through highly location-specific points of contact with her flock, through parish ministry and various chaplaincies, thus achieving ‘a reach and a granular knowledge that exceeds the capacity of the state’.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Fittall, ‘The Practice and Politics of Establishment’. 343.

<sup>183</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury’s Commission on Urban Priority Areas. *Faith in the City: A Call for Action by Church and Nation*. (London: Church House Publishing, 1985). 258. §10.103.

<sup>184</sup> Chaplin, *Beyond Establishment*.134-171.

<sup>185</sup> Cranmer, F., Lucas, L., and B. Morris. *Church and State: A mapping exercise*. (London: University College London, 2006). 9.

<sup>186</sup> Noyes, J. & P. Blond. ‘Holistic Mission: Social Action and the Church of England’. ResPublica. July 2013. <[https://www.respublica.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/mfp\\_ResPublica-Holistic-Mission-FULL-REPORT-10July2013.pdf](https://www.respublica.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/mfp_ResPublica-Holistic-Mission-FULL-REPORT-10July2013.pdf)>. 3. Retrieved 4 Jun 2023.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid, 8.

## 4 The way forward—is there any place for an established church in a world of religious and cultural diversity?

In our time, Christianity may be ‘apprehended with affection and sympathy in literature and art’ but ‘obsolete for the present purpose of society.’<sup>188</sup> However, when we consider the goal of religion *and* law as ‘to acknowledge the human experience’ and to safeguard and ‘promote the dignity of the person’,<sup>189</sup> then we will come to appreciate that the annihilation of religious participation in English polity will be detrimental to a balanced and healthy public discourse on just about any matter. In the space below, I will briefly detail some arguments for political secularism with reference to the work of the Church, and evaluate the applicability of them as reasons for the Church’s disestablishment.

### 4.1 Political secularism

Political secularism stems from the concept of political autonomy, ie, the State (in general) is an *ens causa sui* entity—it should not be answerable to religious authority, its activities should have no explicit religious purposes, and its public discourse should not be constructed from religious reasons.<sup>190</sup> However, counter-intuitive as it may seem, ‘pure’ secularism is not the answer nor the means to true equality and diversity; while it can be an effective challenge to unchecked political powers and inherited historical precedence,<sup>191</sup> as I have briefly mentioned in §3.4.3, it can equally cause uncalled for interference in the individual practice of religion. The rise of ‘religiously-inspired radicalisation and violence’ in places where moderate secularism is practiced poses for us the question of secularism’s ability in facilitating the transformation of a historically monoreligious society into a culturally and religiously diverse public space.<sup>192</sup>

As *Mission-shaped Church* noted, ‘no society is culturally neutral’;<sup>193</sup> disestablishment will not erase England of her Christian foundations, nor will it create the religion-free public square secularists would like to secure for the future generations to come. This has been noted by Malcolm Brown, the Director of Mission and Public Affairs for the Archbishops’ Council of the Church of England:<sup>194</sup>

Our institutions [...] fail to make rational sense [...] they are a patchwork of old ways of doing things and offer a perpetual challenge to the assumption that the future is always

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<sup>188</sup> Chadwick Report. 7.

<sup>189</sup> Griffin, L. ‘No Law Respecting the Practice of Religion’. In *Detroit Mercy Law Review*. 85(4). (2008). 476-493. Here 476.

<sup>190</sup> Triandafyllidou & Magazzini, (eds.). *Routledge Handbook*. 3.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid*, 3 & 5.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>193</sup> Archbishops’ Council. *Mission-shaped Church: church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context*. (London: Church House Publishing, 2004). 90.

<sup>194</sup> Brown, M. ‘Establishment: Some Theological Considerations’. In *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 21 (2019). 329–341. Here 335f.



the enemy of the past; and because they are institutions which enshrine ideas of identity which offend the principle that only by having no roots, no history and no particularity at all, can one ever approach the great virtues of fairness and equality.

It is a misconception to imagine that a society without active religious involvement means a society where everyone, religious or not, flourishes ‘equally’ since secularism and religion are *correlative* concepts, not opposing ones.<sup>195</sup> Furthermore, we cannot assume that secularism is the *only* authentic expression of modern equitable governance, since the development of which is still dependent on the social context in which it seeks to influence.<sup>196</sup> Chaplin wrote this with regard to the notion of England being a ‘Christian’ nation because of the presence of an established Church:<sup>197</sup>

A Christian nation stance [...] holds that the nation is a corporate entity that can be called to account for departing from Christian moral standards [...] A Christian State stance goes beyond this and argues that the state’s upholding of such standards should include an official recognition of the Christian faith, either by establishing a church or by confessing Christian faith in a constitution, or both.

However, this clearly is not, and has not been for a long while, the approach nor stance of the Church of England regarding her established status, as this dissertation has shown. The fact is that no statesperson in the United Kingdom will dare to wave a bible in front of a Church as a sign of their subscription to the Christian faith (with whatever intention behind it); on the other hand, one will remember that, in the United States of America where State and Religion are separated, President Trump ordered protestors to be cleared so that he could walk to Ashburton House, the parish house of St. John’s Church, to be photographed in front of it with a bible in his hand.<sup>198</sup> Whatever the reasons behind Trump’s action, it is another example of how political and religious campaigns can be mingled to achieve their respective agendas surreptitiously.<sup>199</sup>

Contrary to the claims of disestablishmentarians, especially those who come from an atheistic point of view, fuelling ‘social and political antipathies’ to religion from the ‘secularly-inclined social majorities’<sup>200</sup> or eradicating the Church’s established status simply cannot guarantee the emergence of a religiously-neutral space which will fill the gap of the established Church in England, whose participation in the life of the nation remains strong despite her soft power may

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<sup>195</sup> Triandafyllidou & Magazzini, (eds.). *Routledge Handbook*. 3.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>197</sup> Chaplin, *Beyond Establishment*. 50.

<sup>198</sup> Jackman, T. *et al.* ‘Police in D.C. make arrests after sweeping peaceful protesters from park with gas, shoving.’ *Washington Post*. 1 Jun 2020. <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2020/06/01/dc-protest-george-floyd-white-house/>>. Retrieved 24 Jun 2023.

<sup>199</sup> For other instances when this has happened in the United States, see: Griffin, L. ‘No Law Respecting the Practice of Religion’. In *Detroit Mercy Law Review*. 85(4). (2008). 476-493. Here 478ff.

<sup>200</sup> Triandafyllidou & Magazzini, (eds.). *Routledge Handbook*, 2.

seem to have been fading for quite some time. In England, far-right political groups and commentators have used Christianity as the litmus test of Englishness in order to hide behind their racist ideologies, claiming that a less Christian England is a less ‘English’ England;<sup>201</sup> the work and witness of the Church of England with her interfaith partners shows that the established Church in England believes the exact opposite: that England is what she is today because of her multi-religious and multicultural make-up.

## 4.2 Civil liberties

In the spectrum of establishment, with state subjugation at one extreme and purely ceremonial recognition at the other, the Church of England has long been considered nearer to the latter than the former;<sup>202</sup> this is sometimes referred to as ‘weak establishment’. Compared to other modes of establishment, the Church of England no longer receives State-organised financial support like her counterparts in Germany, Spain, and Sweden to name a few.<sup>203</sup> The Church of England, however, plays a considerably bigger part in the nation’s life compared to the Churches in the countries listed above. Moreover, as I have expounded in §3.4.3, at present, the status of the Lords Spiritual does more to ensure different religions, moral beliefs and forms of culture are accommodated in the public square, than what the secularists can claim to guarantee after disestablishment.

Therefore, a crucial differentiation has to be made in the disestablishment discourse between the concept of ‘equal status’ and ‘equal liberty’<sup>204</sup>— the former may imply or advance the latter, yet to claim that securing the former will automatically procure the latter is pure conjecture when it comes to disestablishment on English soil. Examples from France and the United States have shown that it is far easier for the State to lapse into religious reductionism, where religion and private morality are merely considered preferences and not beliefs that transcend convictions and the cultures of the time, or worse, as we have seen, where one religious group is in fact given *de facto* but unacknowledged preference over others. Even more worryingly, the religious dimension of the lives of the citizens may end up being maintained through weak and loosely held presumptions, where everyone in positions of power or not, secular or religious, second-guess the position and opinion of the other since they have no obligation, moral or political, to understand the other. Here, I believe, is an example where Rawls’ principle of equal liberty, as he

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<sup>201</sup> Eg Calvin, R. ‘Why Enoch was Right’. 30 Nov 2022. <<https://calvinrobinson.substack.com/p/why-enoah-was-right>>.

<sup>202</sup> Maurice Gwyer as quoted in ‘*The Cecil Committee*’, 171.

<sup>203</sup> Pew Research Centre. ‘In Western European Countries With Church Taxes, Support for the Tradition Remains Strong’. 30 Apr 2019. <<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2019/04/30/in-western-european-countries-with-church-taxes-support-for-the-tradition-remains-strong/>>. Retrieved 24 Jun 2023.

<sup>204</sup> For the definition of ‘equal liberty’ see Rawls, J. *A theory of Justice*. (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1999). 176ff & 214f.

advocated, takes precedence over the State's need to give an impression of it practicing equal justice.<sup>205</sup>

### 4.3 Power or 'appearance of power'?<sup>206</sup>—the Church's privilege and accountability

Habgood saw the privilege of the Church, such as her bishops sitting in the House of Lords, as 'the other side of the coin of responsibility' — thus privilege is not 'mere' privilege, but conditions necessary for 'doing the job'.<sup>207</sup> He also noted that the constant debate and reflection on the Church's role in society has been 'one of the great strengths of the dissenting traditions to emphasise that at the heart of the Christian faith there is a tension between the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom of God.'<sup>208</sup> The reality is that the Church is cognisant of her role at 'the apex of the symbolism' of *spiritual* authority, but 'at the base of the pyramid' of *temporal* power.<sup>209</sup>

There is a fine line between the Church being an ambassador of faiths and the Church speaking on behalf of other faith groups as if she is the leading representative of them, and the established Church has been sensitive about not crossing that line. On the other hand, the example of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales 'rededicating' England as the 'Dowry of Mary' in 2020<sup>210</sup> can be seen as an instance when such a line has been crossed because the faith institution in question has no civil obligation to acknowledge other faith groups' legitimate presence in England.

While the Church has not crossed that particular line because she is aware of her status, she cannot turn away from the fact that she *does* have privilege and power—she has, first and foremost, an enormous endowment and she owns more than 120,000 acres of land,<sup>211</sup> both of which generate an income for the Church annually, all because the Church has always been *the* established Church. Martyn Percy, sometime Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, wrote the following concerning the Church's appearance of power:

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid, 214.

<sup>206</sup> Cornwell. *Church & Nation*. 63.

<sup>207</sup> Habgood. *Church and Nation*. 100.

<sup>208</sup> Lord Habgood. *Lords Hansard*. Vol. 630, col 780 (22 May 2002).

<sup>209</sup> Brown, M. 'Establishment'. 339.

<sup>210</sup> The Catholic National Shrine and Basilica of Our Lady. The Rededication of England as the Dowry of Mary. <<https://www.walsingham.org.uk/rededication/>>. Retrieved 20 Jun 2023.

<sup>211</sup> Boyle, C. 'How much land does the Church of England own?' *Guardian*. 28 Apr, 2006. <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/apr/28/religion.anglicanism>> and Church Commissioner for England. 'The Church Commissioners for England Annual Report 2021'. <[https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/5950\\_CofE\\_Church%20Commissioners\\_FINAL%20120522%20%281%29.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/5950_CofE_Church%20Commissioners_FINAL%20120522%20%281%29.pdf)>. Both retrieved 23 May 2023.

[In England] there is no appetite for a church that embodies privilege and the power to discriminate while lacking proper accountability or transparency.<sup>212</sup>

This is why the Church, beyond devoting time and resources to serving the country, has, for decades, meticulously kept and published her financial and ministry records, including her investments. It is significant to note that no other religious body from the main religions in the United Kingdom has done so,<sup>213</sup> and among other Christian denominations, only the Methodists and Baptists have kept and published such records;<sup>214</sup> the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales has never published such statistics systematically at all.<sup>215</sup> The Church has also commissioned various sociological researches, such as the aforementioned *Faith in the City* and *The Independent Review By The Bishop Of Truro For The Support Of Persecuted Christians*, so to understand better the demographics and circumstances of the communities and contexts she serves so that she may invest in her ministry accordingly. These research and statistics also provide the nation, especially the government, with reliable and important data to facilitate other forms of social development and aid.

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<sup>212</sup> Percy, M. 'With the Church of England dying, how much longer can we justify having bishops in the House of Lords?' *Prospect Magazine*. 6 Oct 2022. <<https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/with-the-church-of-england-dying-how-much-longer-can-we-justify-having-bishops-in-the-house-of-lords>>. Retrieved 9 Jun 2023.

<sup>213</sup> We can only rely on their annual returns submitted to the Charity Commission for England and Wales for an account of their financial activities.

<sup>214</sup> Both reports being a single page long, they are extremely limited in scope. See: The Methodist Church. 'Methodism in Numbers – Statistics at a Glance (2021 edition)'. <[https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/22021/methodism\\_in\\_numbers\\_2021.pdf](https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/22021/methodism_in_numbers_2021.pdf)>. And Baptists Together. 'Annual Church Statistics Report'. <<https://www.baptist.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=305508>>. Both retrieved 25 Jun 2023.

<sup>215</sup> Bullivant, S. 'Catholic Research Forum Reports 1. Contemporary Catholicism in England and Wales: A statistical report on recent British Social Attitudes survey data.' <<https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/research/centres/benedict-xvi/docs/2018-feb-contemporary-catholicism-report-may16.pdf>>. 6. Retrieved 20 Jun 2023.

## 5 Establishment in the next decade and beyond

The Church, in the face of the sharp decline in regular attendance, has realised that she has to work for her right to her place in English society, as her residue power and privilege will not guarantee her survival in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>216</sup> Yet, the discussion of the Church's current reforms and renewal, such as her 'Vision and Strategy', and her desperate attempt to retain her congregations, do not mention her establishment and how that may be of use to her; the fact is, despite her continued and extensive involvement in almost every community throughout England, Church attendance has continued to fall.<sup>217</sup> We can understand this as pointing us to an essential truth in her missiology—that proselytisation has clearly never been a motivation for her service to the nation. The Church, as a 'unique gateway organisation', is not concerned with her own agenda but with 'the whole life of the country and all the communities that constitute our nation' because that is the heart of God's own mission which the Church takes part in.<sup>218</sup>

The political-theologian Joan Lockwood O'Donovan remarked that: 'the Church [of England]'s proclamation is reflected in a legal framework established and enforced by human government, the church is part of the body politic, yet not of its essence.'<sup>219</sup>

If we can accept that the Church of England's establishment has evolved to become politically-neutral, unintrusive to private and civil liberties in general, and broadly representing the importance of religious participation in the life of the nation, then we must ask the question: is it worth the effort and resources to initiate the disestablishment of the Church of England? If the established status of the Church of England does not affect her mission, her contribution to society, then even though her status is dispensable, and from a theological and sociological point of view undesirable, given the current deprivation of the society, the cost of disestablishment cannot be justified; to many, disestablishment cannot be further from their interest, and to spend precious parliamentary hours and public money on it will be a great misuse of the already limited public resources. It seems that in practical terms, to allow the Church of England to carry on to be the established Church in England, in other words, to keep the *status quo*, is perhaps, ironically, the *via media* solution which Anglicanism is famous for.

This dissertation has attempted to demonstrate that the life of the established Church of England is defined by geography and sustained by her generous approach to mission, and not maintained through asserting her ceremonial and political distinction among other denominations or religions. Therefore, any threat to the parish system—such as the inadequate

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<sup>216</sup> Nye, W. 'The Church of England'. 195.

<sup>217</sup> Fittall. 'The Practice and Politics of Establishment'. 344.

<sup>218</sup> Noyes & Blond. 'Holistic Mission'. 8.

<sup>219</sup> Lockwood O'Donovan, J. 'The liberal legal legacy of English Church Establishment: A theological contribution to the legal accommodation of religious plurality in Europe.' In *Journal of Law, Philosophy and Culture*. 6(1) 2011, 17-45. Here 30.

clerical and financial provisions for parish ministry, the creation of mega-benefices with dozens of churches but few ordained ministers in residence, and the tolerance of church communities with an exclusive understanding of parochial ministries, as well as the Church's failure in formalising absolute independent safeguarding scrutiny, will be the final nails in the coffin that is the weak establishment of the Church of England in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century—these will only further weaken her legitimacy and moral standing as a national institution with access to the English masses.

The Church's establishment has been operating as a pivotal, though not always effective, counterbalance to the natural tendency of organisations to be obsessively introspective.<sup>220</sup> Admittedly, as Percy has pointed out, there is a mismatch between the expectations of what an 'Established Church' should look like and what the public actually sees—that the Church, which is struggling to stay afloat given its internal disagreements and safeguarding issues, is ever more inward-looking and self-serving rather than being an institution that exists to serve the common good, especially when those are the aspects of the Church's organisation which tend to get more publicity.

For example, the General Synod of the Church of England voted to allow the blessing of same-sex couples in the church, though not without some intense debates and publicity. The results fell short of the expectation of many who would like to see the established Church's practice align with the State's in terms of same-sex marriage. Consequentially, there have been suggestions that the UK Parliament should pressure the Church of England to speed up its legislative process and allow same-sex couples to be married in Anglican churches as soon as possible;<sup>221</sup> many see this discrepancy between state law and canon law as a case in point that the Church of England should no longer be the established Church in England.<sup>222</sup>

The Church of England is not able to 'progress' with society, such as allowing same-sex marriage to be conducted in her churches, partly due to her internal disagreements, but also due to her status within the Anglican Communion, more specifically, the Archbishop of Canterbury's position as *primus inter pares* of all Anglican primates.<sup>223</sup> This may seem a poor excuse to many within and without the Church, that to preserve a communion that is barely *in* communion, the Church is willing to sacrifice her equally prestigious position in the nation as a leading moral voice.

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<sup>220</sup> Brown, M. 'Establishment'. 331.

<sup>221</sup> Sherwood, H. 'Same-sex marriage row looms over Church of England synod' *The Observer*. 5 Feb 2023. <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/feb/05/same-sex-marriage-row-looms-over-church-of-england-synod>>. Retrieved 2 Mar 2023.

<sup>222</sup> Eg Ambrose, T. 'Welby told me gay marriage progress will be "glacial", says Sandi Toksvig'. *Guardian*. 26 Jan 2023. <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jan/26/sandi-toksvig-laments-untenable-church-of-england-stance-on-gay-marriage>>. Retrieved 2 Mar 2023.

<sup>223</sup> 'Anglican Communion'. *Archbishop of Canterbury*. n.d. <<https://web.archive.org/web/20080122153935/http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/106>>. Retrieved 3 June 2023.

While this certainly is a valid argument, one that I am willing to support, we can see how this tension plays out similarly in international relations, for example, that we are not able to support Ukraine in military ways, as a nation and as a member of NATO, yet we can all agree that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is unwarranted and is an act of aggression fuelled entirely on a nationalism that is incompatible with the moral standards of most countries of the world.

The truth is, steering an institution on a national level has always been an impossible task, and we can never live up to the expectations of everyone, however valid their convictions may be. The Church must navigate within her established status, between being in agreement with a very few or in general agreement with many.<sup>224</sup>

As Brown noted, we will continue to see personal, communal and political relationships fall apart 'because the structures and ideas we have relied upon to manage difference are not up to the task,'<sup>225</sup> and any reform in the current establishment structure must address this as a priority, especially in the development of the independent scrutiny of the Church's investment and safeguarding processes.

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<sup>224</sup> Arnold, T. *Principles of Church Reform*. (Ed by Jackson, M. J. & J. Rogan.) (London: SPCK, 1962). 113.

<sup>225</sup> Brown, M. 'Establishment'. 335.

## 6. Conclusion

‘The inheritance of history can be a dead hand, heavy upon the present.’<sup>226</sup>

This piece of research, constrained by the space afforded, has demonstrated the complexity of the constitutional network within which the Church of England’s establishment operates. I have shown that the cooperation between the Church, the Monarch, and State in England is multi-faceted and constantly evolving; they have worked in harmony at times, and at others at loggerheads with each other.<sup>227</sup>

In some critics’ eyes, the Church has in effect already been disestablished, and the bishops have failed to maintain their ‘organic connection’ to the English masses.<sup>228</sup> Yet, however one understands the current strength and expressions of the Church’s establishment, one cannot deny that the Church has found a stable means to carry out her mission in England through her ‘political’ (in the sense of ‘pertaining to the *polis*’) alliance with the State; under which she demonstrates a generous understanding of Christian mission which is ‘cast in the form of gentle pastoral care’.<sup>229</sup> The fact that this establishment, ‘weak’ as it is, has evolved so significantly over time, both ecclesiologically and politically, points us to a willingness on the Church’s part to adapt and recast her privileges, not so that she can survive in an increasingly secular world, but so that the people of God in England may be best served. The image of the Church using her established status in self-serving ways is unfounded and is a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of her establishment.

Indeed, anyone can condemn bureaucracy and the inequality of systems, and call for sweeping changes to just about anything in any society, but progress is not made with noise, it is a collective discernment that requires patience and consensus. Yet, we must bear in mind that in politics, timing can be everything<sup>230</sup>— there may well be an event in the not so distant future which will trigger the process of disestablishment, but it seems unlikely at this particular moment in the history of the Church and State.

When we consider the Church’s service to the nation and her establishment, we should not see the tolerance and indiscriminate service of the Church with a simple ‘sentimental indulgence’;<sup>231</sup> as many commentators have noted, should the Church be disestablished, it is likely that the

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<sup>226</sup> Chadwick Report. 7.

<sup>227</sup> Greaves, R. W. ‘The Working of the Alliance: A Comment on Warburton’. In Bennett G. V. & J. D. Walsh. (Eds.). *Essays in Modern English Church History in Memory of Norman Sykes*. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1966). 163–180. Here 178f.

<sup>228</sup> Woodhe, L. & L. Winkett. ‘The Duel: Should the Church of England be disestablished?’ *Prospect Magazine*. 24 Mar 2016. <<https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/regulars/48625/the-duel-should-the-church-of-england-be-disestablished>>. Retrieved 2 June 2023.

<sup>229</sup> Cornwell. *Church & Nation*. 53.

<sup>230</sup> Fittall, Sir William. ‘The Practice and Politics of Establishment’. In *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 24 (2022). 332–345. Here 338.

<sup>231</sup> Cornwell. *Church & Nation*. 39.



nature and breadth of the Church's ministry would continue more or less in the same fashion as before.

What is certain, however, is that the Church does not exist for mere social harmony, her mission speaks to the wider issues that are at stake: feeding people who rely on food banks as a result of poor governance, caring for people who have been displaced because of war and human trafficking, tending to the needs of the sick and dying—in hospitals and battlefields; she also continues to bear the responsibility of celebrating with the nation all lives born and lost, even the conclusion of a reign and the start of a new one.

Deep-seated political and religious divisions that exist in this country will perpetually challenge the Church's established status; England has moved on from those days of 'uniform and clearly-recognised culture' and religious adherence,<sup>232</sup> and the Church can no longer hide behind the ceremonies in the glorious gothic cathedrals in this country or the impenetrable legal dealings which happen in the General Synod and the House of Lords. She must show that she is confident in her ministry which she carries out as the established Church in England, and that her ministry is based on the 'belief in the coincidence of truth and utility and in the virtue of a balanced social constitution'.<sup>233</sup>

The Church of England's establishment is, and has been, an invaluable asset to the Church, and she will have to prove, with her faithful Christian witness and generous ministry, that the established Church of England is not merely the 'religious icing on top of a fairly secular cake' in 21<sup>st</sup> Century England.<sup>234</sup> The Church will, I believe, face the disestablishment question head-on when her established status becomes a hindrance to her ministry, and when disestablishment seems the right course of action. But for now, the established Church of England still has 'unparalleled potential to become an institution that all of Britain desperately needs' *because* she is the established Church in England,<sup>235</sup> and to disestablish the Church for the sake of disestablishing the Church without considering her contribution to English society within and without the establishment will be detrimental to the political and religious discourse in England.

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<sup>232</sup> Croft, S. *Mission-shaped questions: defining issues for today's church*. (New York: Seabury Press, 2010). 1.

<sup>233</sup> Sachs. *The transformation of Anglicanism*. 26.

<sup>234</sup> Cornwell. *Church & Nation*. 56.

<sup>235</sup> Noyes & Blond. 'Holistic Mission'. 8.

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26 Hen.VIII C1.	Act of Supremacy 1534.
1 Mary, st. 2, C2, & 1 & 2 Ph & M. C8.	Treason Act 1554.
1 Eliz. 1 C1 & 1 Eliz. 1 C2.	Act of Supremacy 1558.
5 & 6 Edw. VI C2.	Poor Act 1551.
1 Will and Mar. Sess. 2 C2.	Bill of Rights 1688.
1 Will. and Mar. C6.	Coronation Oath Act 1688.
12 & 13 Will. III 3 C2.	Act of Settlement 1700.
10 Geo. 4. C7.	Roman Catholic Relief Act 1829.
9 & 10 Vict. C59.	Religious Disabilities Act 1846.
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15 and 16 Geo. VI & 1 Eliz. II C52.	Prison Act 1952.

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