

We support and encourage Christians as they impact public life at national, regional and local levels through prayer, fellowship and practical resources.

We speak up about issues of injustice through discussions with MPs, writing policy motions, holding debates and media engagement.

We build positive relationships within the party, and between the Christian world and the world of politics.

We inspire and equip Christians to become more politically engaged.

We pray regularly for our government and nation.



On Furlough by Andrew Burrell

In April, along with most of my team at Lib Dem HQ, I was furloughed.

My reaction was mixed. My initial excitement – “I’m being paid to be on holiday!” – quickly turned sour. As the weeks went by, I wondered if I would ever go back to work.

I’d agreed with my boss before lockdown started that I’d leave my job in the summer. Had I already worked my last day? Would I get to say goodbye to my colleagues in person? How would I find a new job when the economy was collapsing?

As weeks turned into months, I slowly felt more and more miserable, so I began asking God why. He showed me that what I was feeling wasn’t just boredom.

I loved my job. It was a natural outworking of my faith. Plus, it was a productive way to vent my frustration at the injustice I saw in the world. But now I could no longer work, I no longer felt useful, either to the world or to God.

That feeling was a lie that needed fixing. But instead, I found myself constantly scrolling through Twitter to try to feel close to the action. All that did was make me increasingly dismayed at the latest Cummings and goings. And I was one of the lucky ones. I still had a stable income when millions did not. I didn’t know anyone who had died of the dreadful disease when thousands did.

We won’t know why God let the pandemic happen: at least, not in this life. But we can ask ourselves what God might be teaching us, both as individuals and as a church.

I am part of a new church plant – could it continue to grow via Zoom? Yes, it could. God worked through our online prayer meetings. Being altogether on one call meant that I had great conversations with people at church who I wouldn’t usually speak to. New friendships have formed.

The gentler pace meant the church could sort out things we had neglected – like paperwork! We reflected on how to steward our finances properly and how to write policies that support victims and pursue justice when things go wrong.

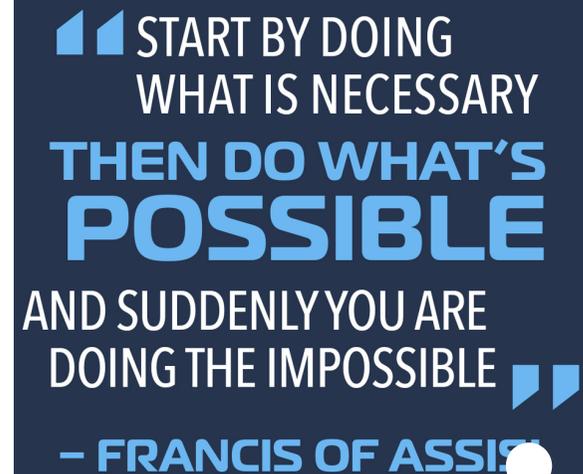
Personally, the pandemic was a wake-up call. God showed me how my work had a stranglehold on my life. Yes, it was an outworking of my faith, but I was turning it into an idol. Now that I was moving on, how could I ensure my next phase of life had Jesus at its centre?

This pandemic has been painful for all of us. But I know a God that knows me deeply and loves me. He knows what it was like to suffer: to have died on a cross and to have had the weight of human sin on his shoulders.

Through Jesus, God revealed to us that he is on our side. He has made a way for suffering to be defeated – once and for all. He picks us up off the ground, brushes off the dust, and helps us to grow.

Some things are slowly returning to normal. I got to spend a month back at work before I left. I got to see some of my old colleagues at the pub. I now have university studies to get my teeth into.

But most importantly, I have a relationship with the living God. Not even Co-Vid19 can take that from me.



**START BY DOING
WHAT IS NECESSARY
THEN DO WHAT'S
POSSIBLE
AND SUDDENLY YOU ARE
DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE**
– FRANCIS OF ASSISI

God's provision in an economic crisis

Our Interim Director, Lizzie Jewkes, owns a tea room. Here is one of her stories of God's provision during the pandemic.

In late 2017, I bought the lease to a closed down café and opened it as a vintage style tea room. It was something the I believed God prompted me to do. I called it Grace Tea Room. While the customers who did come in loved it, there simply were not enough of them and it continued to make a loss, only sustained by my unpaid work and the generosity of people who out of the blue would give me money to pay the rent or the electricity bill. Then Covid 19 happened and with no other option, I had to try and turn a vintage tea room into a takeaway and delivery service. To my astonishment, I found that people in lockdown were desperate for afternoon tea and cake. Business boomed like never before. But I had a new problem – I was finding it impossible to buy flour. I'd never kept large stocks and with sales of my homemade cakes rocketing I was rapidly running out. Twice a day I would queue up at different supermarkets, but apart from obtaining 2 bags of bread flour for the paninis I make for the tea room, my queuing was always to no avail. I was getting desperate. Without flour, I wouldn't have cake to sell. So I did what I should have done in the first place – I gave the problem to God. I prayed - if he wanted me to make cake, then he would have to find the flour. A couple of hours later, a customer came in who was someone I'd known for years as a neighbour. I mentioned to him to the flour problem. "Had I tried the Polish shop a few doors away?" he asked. I hadn't thought of trying there. He was only gone a few minutes before returning with 10kg of plain flour. 10kg! He explained that he'd bought it at a

discount as he knows the people who run the shop. I was blown away by God's supply. Later that evening, I told the story to my Zoom Bible Study group. One person said that if I ever got bread flour, to let her know where from as she was unable to find it. I offered her one of my two bags of bread flour. After all, if my God can find 10kg of flour in a couple of hours, I was certain he could find more bread flour if the sales of paninis went up too and we arranged that she would collect it the next evening. The next afternoon, I received a phone call from the same customer. He was in Aldi and had bought 9 x 1.5kg bags of self raising flour – the most they would let him buy. 13.5kg! I was stunned. I popped down to meet him near Aldi and collected the bags. When my Bible study friend came to collect the bread flour she mentioned that she'd been trying to find self raising flour for an elderly lady in our church. Self raising? No problem. I had 9 bags in my car! I happily passed one over.

I told the story to a friend of mine. Her husband is in the very vulnerable category so they were both in lockdown as she could not risk carrying the virus home. They are eligible for supermarket deliveries but one week, their shopping arrived minus eggs. Now, she eats a lot of eggs as she is on a very low carb diet. She told me that she resolved not to worry as if God could find me flour, he equally knew she needed eggs. 30



minutes later, there was a knock at the door and a friend from another village came to bring her some fabric to use for making scrubs. Along with the fabric she'd included 6 eggs from her chickens!

Sales of my homemade paninis increased too, but I found a single 1.5kg bag of bread flour during one of my shopping trips to replace the one I'd given away so by sharing I had not missed out. With demand for my cakes increasing week by week, 23.5kg of flour lasted less than 3 weeks and I was back to needing more flour. By now flour was appearing in the shops again. I had to go to two different supermarkets that evening and assumed that I would find the flour I needed in one (or both). Driving home, it dawned on me that I had failed to even look for flour. 'No problem' I felt God say 'You're passing Morrison's, they have flour'. So I pulled in to Morrison's car park. I'm ashamed to say that I didn't take a trolley or even a basket. I assumed the most they would let me have would be a couple of 1.5kg bags & I could carry those. It turns out, that Morrison's were selling 16kg sacks of flour. I had to lug that sack across the supermarket and across the car park. While my faith was big enough to try to look for flour in Morrison's, it wasn't big enough to take a trolley. Don't make the same mistake – if you're going to pray for rain take an umbrella!

Since then, a friend has found a flour mill who will supply me



with sacks of cake flour and my bread making friends with sacks of bread flour. As I order large amounts, they can save the cost of delivery by being included with my orders. God is so good.

Lizzie Jewkes

Interim Director LDCF

Nevertheless, They Persisted by Will Dyer



“The Bible calls us to hope. To persevere and have faith in things not seen. ‘They were still living by faith when they died,’ scripture tell us.” Those were the words spoken by President Barack Obama as part of the eulogy of Rev. Clementa Pinckney, who died in the mass shooting at Mother Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, South Carolina in 2015. “We are here to remember a man of God who lived by faith, a man who believed in things not seen. A man who believed there were better days ahead... because he

believed his efforts would deliver a better life for those who followed.”

In times of great change it is important to live by faith in things unseen; to imagine a future that will be better for those who are to come. Clementa Pinckney became a pastor aged 18, and a public servant at 23. But like many of those before him, such as William Wilberforce and Octavia Hill, Rev. Pinckney did not see a distinction between being a pastor and a public servant. Neither should the church. Rev. Pinckney has been quoted as saying, “Our calling is not just within the walls of the congregation but the life and community in which our congregation resides.”

Rev. Pinckney, William Wilberforce, Dr. Martin Luther King and Octavia Hill achieved great change despite all being in the minority. Rev. Pinckney was a member of the minority party in the State Senate, and therefore had to fight harder to get money for his constituents. It took Wilberforce over twenty years and four attempts to get the Abolition of the Slave Trade bill passed in Parliament. Octavia Hill faced gender discrimination but,

‘nevertheless, she persisted,’ in setting up the first housing cooperative, forming what would be the basis of the original Beveridge Welfare state. She would go onto be a key adviser to many government ministers, and was barred from taking the seat she so richly deserved, even without any formal education.

The history of social action in the church goes back centuries. I fear there is a tradition of proactive activism that the church has lost in recent years. However, through God’s grace, movements have grown, leaders have risen and change has been accomplished

For those who do not see themselves on the front line or think that they, by themselves, can speak up, I would like to point to Mahalia Jackson. During the civil rights movement, Jackson was a great admirer and encourager of Dr. Martin Luther King. In her own career as a gospel singer, she mentored some of the greats, including Aretha Franklin, yet the civil rights movement was her passion. Jackson had heard Dr. King speak many times including one such time in Birmingham Alabama, when Dr. King spoke of a dream for a nation undivided by racial tensions. When

Dr. King later came to deliver the keynote address to crowds in Washington D.C., Jackson could see from the sidelines that he was drying up, which is when she shouted out the line that would spark the improvised speech that would inspire a nation. “Tell them about the dream, Martin! Tell them about the dream!”. Mahalia Jackson lived by faith, a woman who believed in things not seen, a woman who believed there were better days to come.

How do we carry on this Christian tradition of activism? Even for those who do not want to be on the front line, there is so much we can all do to bring renewal to our world.

Encourage – Just like Mahalia Jackson did, keeping an eye on those pursuing justice is just as important. Social activism can be a lonely journey, and having friends around you, just asking how you are doing, can make a huge difference. Feel free to challenge others, as it often clarifies the opinions of all those involved.

Engage – In 2016, Christian in Politics set up a campaign called ‘Disagree Well’. It’s all

about how we can discuss the difficult topics whilst still being respectful.

Join in – There are so many ways to join in the conversation: vote, write to your local MP, volunteer for a social action project, or become a member of a political party. Joining in gives you the power – the power of whispering up close, rather than shouting from the sidelines.



The church during Lockdown

‘The churches are closed’ it was claimed and while our *buildings* were closed it was true, the church wasn’t closed because the church isn’t a building. With churches unable to meet due to restrictions on social gatherings, thousands of churches began streaming their services online, making their services accessible for the first time to those to who cannot attend a building. I remember my elderly Great Aunt telling me how much she loved Songs of Praise because it gave her the opportunity to join in with worshipping God. She would have loved the choice of services now available.

Recent research shows that people are engaging more with Christianity since lockdown. Bible app downloads shot up in March globally. The top English-language Bible on Google Play and App Store was installed almost two million times, the highest amount ever recorded for March, according to Appfigures. Similarly, one of the UK’s largest online Christian bookstores, Eden, has seen sales of physical Bibles rise by 55 per cent in April, while Google searches for “prayer” and “Christianity” have skyrocketed.

Research by Savanta ComRes for Tearfund makes interesting reading. A quarter of UK adults say they have watched or listened to a religious service since lockdown. One in twenty UK adults who say they have watched or listened to a religious service since lockdown had never gone to church. A third of UK adults aged 18-34 say they have watched or listened to a religious service since lockdown. Read that again. A THIRD of young adults have watched or listened to a religious service online since lockdown. These are the ‘missing generation’ the ones we find it most difficult to reach.

People are not just watching online services, they're also turning to prayer. Just under half of UK adults saying they pray, and among those who pray a third say that they have prayed since the COVID-19 lockdown because they believe it makes a difference. Once again, it's the younger adults aged 18-34 are significantly more likely to say they pray regularly (at least once a month) than adults aged 55 and over (30% vs. 25%).

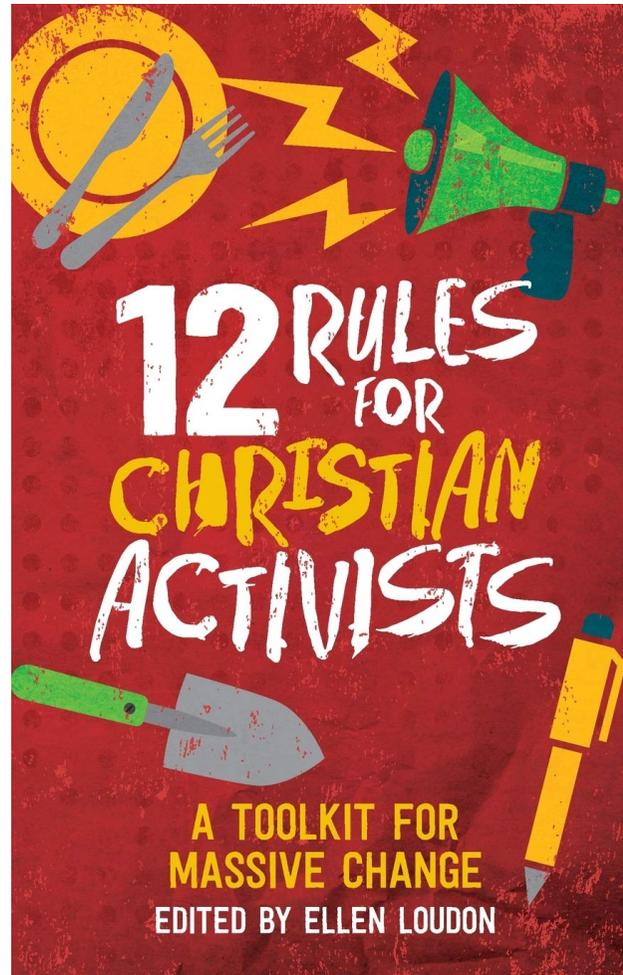
Access to our church buildings may still be restricted, but the church is responding to the challenge of Covid-19. I know my church will continue to live stream services and upload them to YouTube, something we never did before, making access to our church available to more than those who can attend the building. Personally, I usually also make time to watch the recording of the service at Bluewater Mission church in Hawaii. They stream the services from the church office and pray for their 'cakey' (children) and talk about Ohana groups (home groups) but everything else is the same, they even sing the same songs as us. The only difference is that they only wear beach clothes and no one owns a jumper. It's good to join in with and worship with people across the globe.

Liberal Democrat Christian Forum
ABOUT US

LDCF is a voice for Christians in the Liberal Democrats and a voice of liberal democracy among Christians.
We do this by:

- Speaking out about injustice to impact policy and create change.
- Bridging the gap between the Christian community and the Party.
- Inspiring Christians to become more politically engaged.
- Praying regularly for our government, nation and all that we do.

JOIN US TODAY



12 Rules For Christian Activists: A Toolkit For Massive Change by Ellen Loudon

**Online Book Launch Monday 5th October 2020
19:00 – 20:30 BST on Zoom**

Preview by contributor Kieran Bohan, Open Table Network Coordinator

'...what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?' - Micah 6.8

ARE YOU concerned about poverty, world peace, the environment, well-being and the most vulnerable in our society?

Do you want to make a difference? Do you want to change the world for the better?

Do you want to put your Christian faith into action but don't know where to start?

Do you want to join a movement of people who want to do justice, love kindness and seek fairness and well-being for all?

If that sounds like you, then *12 Rules for Christian Activists* might be a good place to explore how to live out your faith in our complex demanding world.

This book is an introduction to a way of ordering an active Christian life that make positive change possible in a world that desperately needs difference makers.

The author, Ellen Loudon, is Canon Chancellor of Liverpool Cathedral focussing on their Fairness and Wellbeing agenda. She combines this role with that of Director of Social Justice for the Diocese of Liverpool, which is one of the most deprived areas in the Church of England.

12 Rules for Christian Activists has emerged from her engagement in social justice and life as a Christian living in the UK. She writes:

'I am a social activist, and my motivation for this comes from my Christian faith. Not all social activists are Christians but I think all Christians should be activists. It is on this basis that I wanted to write the Rules

that have emerged from my practice and my learning.'

The Rules are not new - they have been assembled from various places: a grounding in the Old Testament, the life of Jesus and his teachings, the inspiration of the early Church. In addition the rules are influenced by Catholic Social Teaching, the writing of St Ignatius, social and community organising, and asset-based community development to name a few (the book includes a useful bibliography and website links that point to these and other influences).

Ellen explains:

'The Rules are there to help me to keep on track and remember my calling. It also helps me to remember that I am not alone with this mission. We have a God who calls us and loads of Christian Activists following a similar call.'

My husband and I were delighted when Ellen approached us to share our call and experience by writing a chapter on one of the 12 Rules - the call to Diversify.

Suzanne DeWitt Hall, who writes about the intersection of sexuality and theology, says:

'When we experience diversity, the veil through which we see God becomes a little bit thinner.'

Jesus prayed for those who believe in and follow him, 'that they all may be one' [John 17:21]. Thank God he didn't say 'one and the same!' This rings true with our experience as co-founders of the Open Table Network, which is a partnership

of Christian worship communities which offer a warm welcome to people who are: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer / Questioning, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA+) and all who seek an inclusive Church.

The educational charity Inclusive Church has produced an excellent four-session course called *Radical Welcome*, aimed at helping churches begin to look at what it might mean to go beyond being inclusive - to be radically welcoming of diversity: inclusive-church.org/resources/radical-welcome-course

Session 3 of *Radical Welcome* invites us to reflect on the journey, from inviting, through inclusion, to radical welcome. Simply, the message of a culture of invitation is 'Come, join our community and share our cultural heritage,' in other words, 'Come and be like us', inclusion means 'Help us to be diverse', while radical welcome means 'Bring your culture, your voice, your whole self - we want to engage in truly mutual relationship.'

To illustrate the 'Diversify' rule, we reflect on seeking to offer radical welcome to people of diverse gender and sexuality through the Open Table Network of worship communities. We believe these basic principles are good practice for any Christian community that is serious about embracing and celebrating the full diversity of humanity.

12 Rules for Christian Activists: A Toolkit for Massive Change was published in the middle of lockdown at a time when activism was very much needed.

Churches and community groups were finding themselves at the heart of a new way of working alongside those who were shielding, isolated and vulnerable. Suddenly the shared experience of lockdown highlighted our need for solidarity not just charity.

Join us to hear how you can get involved in social justice and activism at the launch the book *12 Rules for Christian Activists*.

This event is the launch of a timely book that can serve as an introduction to a way of ordering an active Christian life that makes positive change possible in a world that desperately needs difference makers.

Read more: rulesforchristianactivists.com

To register FREE for the book launch, search Eventbrite for *12 Rules for Christian Activists*, or visit eventbrite.co.uk/e/12-rules-for-christian-activists-tickets-117746379591

To find out more about the Open Table Network, visit www.opentable.lgbt



Standing in the Gap

In March of this year, a gap opened up beneath the feet of many people in this country, threatening to take them under. National and international disasters hit everyone, but hardest hit are those who are already barely clinging on.

I am the LDCF Chair, Councillor Mike Beckett, and I had a blessed and busy time during the pandemic in my role as Chief Officer of Colchester Foodbank, the busiest Foodbank in Essex. I had already seen a rise in demand over successive years, but in the first couple of months after lockdown demand increased 300% while 2/3 of our 150-strong volunteer workforce stepped down in order to follow advice on self-isolating and a lot of our 250 partner agencies shut their doors.

That, coupled with social distancing requirements, bare supermarket shelves, fear of dying and lack of real understanding of Covid19, totally reshaped operations and many of us, from Trustees to volunteers, were praying hard. We knew need would be desperate - the poorest are always hit hardest in any crisis - and while many had to accept self-isolation, those of us who remained scraped up our courage, rearranged the furniture, sourced whatever PPE we could get our hands on and stayed open, for floods of clients.

I was amazed by how the public responded. Donations increased. Catering businesses closing down generously thought of us on their blackest day and donated edible stock. My wife and I

spent hours at a time on the phone, to a mix of desperate families fearful and in need of food, agencies trying to bridge gaps and make things work, people volunteering and arranging donations and businesses sorting out deliveries. Our core team put in long hours but it was worth it: without missing a day of service, we trained a new volunteer workforce from the ranks of the furloughed, moved from mostly collection to mostly delivery, opened 2 new temporary sites in church buildings as distribution hubs and started 3 new satellite Foodbank centres with more on the way.

It was the client stories that fuelled our efforts, like the self-isolating, covid-vulnerable pensioner, victim of a clerical error, who had been surviving on old breakfast cereal when his food parcels did not come and reached out to Foodbank when he ran out of that. Or the mother and child fleeing domestic violence, sleeping on the floor in an empty flat, with no food and most agencies that would usually help shut down. Parents suddenly needing to feed their children at home instead of being able to rely on free school meals. Situations like this kept us coming in, despite the very real fears for ourselves and our families that we were all struggling with.

It was not all grim work: we managed keep the 'fun' in fundraising as we wrote and recorded a Covid19song; we featured on the national Together At Home broadcast in a fitness video alongside Olympic athletes; and we organised a visit from Santa in summer, no less, to cheer up

children in lockdown, the route planned meticulously to be seen as much as possible. Fundraising hit a new high as the public were more generous than ever and it reminded me again, at a time when hope was really needed, that God made us for love and made us good; that love is the human default no matter how much we battle our faults and that in times of crisis, love will out.



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“The first casualty of poverty is choice.”

As a foodbank manager, the experience of poverty and suffering is something that's becoming more commonplace, heartbreakingly. Many people, through no fault of their own, go into crisis, be it housing, a job, money, or something else pushing them over the edge when

they're living so close to the poverty line. We call them the JAMs - 'Just about managing' - or the 'squeezed middle'. People who, financially speaking, hit a rock in the road, and find their life journey is derailed and sent off course.

Suddenly, the choices most of us take for granted are not available to them. On the way down you get a few choices: they are not the choices you want but they're the choices you have and you

still have to make them: heating or eating, bus fare or washing powder, new shoes for the kids or repaying that loan. No-one plans to be poor, so commitments like phone contracts still have to be paid for even after a lost job or suddenly having to find a new place to live after a rent hike.

Sadly, too often with our society, problems at their worst come in multiples, twos or threes or more, and it's the complex interplay of these which stops people from simply powering through or pulling themselves up by their bootstraps. A bit further down and the choices are gone: no clubs for your children, you smell of donated deodorant, you eat the food you are given, accept anything you are offered, your children's birthday gifts are chosen by generous strangers.

Too often people can't simply 'choose' to help themselves. You can't budget yourself out of trouble if you have no income and the gaps in the Government safety net during lockdown were large enough for many to fall through, such as the man who had made the decision to go self-employed a few months before, due to having a young child and a baby on the way and wanting more flexible hours. He got nothing and couldn't work. Facing starvation for his young family, he called us.

We give more than food: respect, kindness, listening, agencies to get help from, projects such

as ex-library books for children, sports equipment for families in lockdown, gardening supplies and other things to aid wellbeing. From a selection of toiletries to a menu of support organisations, we begin to reintroduce choice and, with it, dignity.

Faith with Actions

We are all interdependent and at times of crisis, we may become dependent. Dependency is not good for the long run, or even for the medium run, but in the short run, dependency might be the 'least worst', compared to the suffering caused by standing by and doing nothing. And if our Christian faith means anything, then we cannot simply stand by and do nothing. The Bible calls us to marry faith and action and it is by what we do that our faith is known.

Saying you just needed to sort it out yourself betrays a decision to be uninvolved, a turning away, compassion fatigue or apathy. Whatever reasons we give, Jesus made clear in the parable of the Good Samaritan that turning aside is not an option. If we are serious about having community or common unity, we need to make sure everyone can take part, and everyone has access. When people are struggling the most, that's when they need most support targeted to assist them while they are in crisis. Once we enable them to get out of crisis and to carry on with their life, they may go on to live it to the full, moving from surviving to thriving.

Liberal Democrats Do God



The title of this collection of essays, published by the Liberal Democrat Christian Forum is, of course, a reference to Alistair Campbell's (in)famous line on New Labour. The purpose, however, is different. Campbell was seeking to neutralise a contentious question from a journalist who wanted to explore Blair's religious views. This short book, which draws together pieces by twelve senior Liberal Democrat politicians, is trying to open exactly that question up. In the introduction it states that it hopes to highlight that "Christianity is alive and kicking in the Liberal Democrats".

Campbell's comment was made with one jaded eye fixed firmly on the headlines. The purpose of this collection seems to be more introspective, challenging the authors to justify how they can actually be Christian Liberal Democrats. In other words the collection's authors are attempting to prove not only that there are Christian Liberal Democrats, but that Christian Liberal Democracy is a sustainable and consistent intellectual position.

To that end the book is divided into two sections, the first deals with the more theoretical side of the question and considers how Christian faith and the history and ideology of liberalism might mutually support one another. The second section is more practical, exploring a series of policy areas in which Christianity could provide new impetus and ideas to the Liberal Democrats themselves (with examples provided on welfare provision, justice, immigration, international development and poverty). In this latter section Sir Alan Beith's chapter on justice 'Should the State Forgive?' provided a particularly interesting approach to combining liberal ideas on justice with Christian repentance and forgiveness.

It would be fascinating to see how the UK's other major parties' Christian politicians would approach a similar task. However, it is the first section of the book which is the key to assessing whether the authors have succeeded in their task. It is this section that sets out to prove that Christian liberal democracy is actually a consistent and meaningful position.

On the question of if someone can be both liberal and a Christian the book makes a strong case, with Tim Farron and John Pugh leading the way with appeals to history, theology, and ideological convergence. Greg Mulholland follows up with a more combative approach that attacks the party itself for flirting with the danger of moral conformism and abandoning liberalism when it comes to religion. Maybe at times the case is even overstated - much of the press coverage of this book has (rather unfairly) lampooned pensions minister Steve Webb's introduction for

suggesting that "God is a liberal". However, while the case for the compatibility of Christianity and liberalism is made throughout (both theoretically and practically), an opportunity was lost to attack a more fundamental possible problem – can politics itself "do God"? This, more interesting, question has been ignored by both the press and the authors.

Central to Christian thought is the idea of loving one's neighbour and of solidarity. Sadly there is little evidence of either in Westminster. The entire system of British politics is based on conflict. Conflict between parties, not only on election day, but at every parliamentary debate, with rows of Government MPs sat on one side of the room directly facing rows of opposition MPs. Many important debates rapidly descend into a series of tit-for-tat exchanges about whose party is in the wrong. This raises what should be a serious concern for Christian politicians – is this style of politics compatible with their faith?

Not one author really challenges the idea that Christianity and the politics of today's Westminster are good companions. Sarah Teather comes closest when she considers the effect of politicians' words and demonization of scapegoats on society. However, even she pulls up short of going further and challenging whether these dirty tricks of politics are not fundamental to the parliamentary game and potentially at odds with her Christian faith.

This is not to say that Christians should play no role in politics, but to challenge the Liberal Democrat authors, and their Christian counterparts throughout Parliament to go further

on what this book has started and provide an honest self-appraisal of the way in which Christianity and parliamentary politics in the UK interact. Liberal Democrats Do God marks an important point of departure, but having justified the compatibility of party ideology and Christianity, perhaps it is now time to ask the harder question – can UK politics itself really, meaningfully, and without internal contradiction "do God"?

One suspects, without putting words in their mouths, that the answer to that question will be far harder to arrive at. It is easy to see how Christian faith might help inspire thoughts on a particular social policy. It is more difficult to see how today's Christian politicians can rise above the methods of modern UK politics. A strong, cross-party Christian voice on certain issues would be welcome, but difficult to maintain, not least when on so many issues - as this book itself demonstrates - the "Christian voice" is an extremely diverse one. Yet it is a good question and, hopefully, one which this book will lead to reflection on.

Ben Ryan (Ben interned with Theos Think Tank and completed a Masters in European Studies at the LSE, article originally published by Theos.)

Liberal Democrats Do God is published by Liberal Democrat Christian Forum

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