

Whither the Church of England?

A recent survey shows a further decline in UK citizens professing to be Christian or religious in any way.

It is not surprising the Church of England has lost congregations and struggles to attract new supporters. It has used its presence in the Lords and its public platforms to be an ally of many Lib Dem causes, a party which polls around 10% in national polls. It uses its privileged position to promote more overseas aid, more migrants into the UK and to condemn government attempts to stop illegal and dangerous boat crossings from a safe country called France. It is not so keen to use its national pulpit to spread the gospel. It is reluctant to talk about its own extensive property estate and share portfolio. There are times when it turns out they hold shares that do not reflect their views on fossil fuels or other equality matters. The property estate has not been used to house many new arrivals in the UK at a time of extreme housing need given the numbers involved.

The decline of congregations reflects the hostility the Church shows to people with conservative views, as those who were regular Churchgoers have in some cases been put off by the criticisms.

As a democrat who believes people should be free to hold views and disagree with the government I do not object to the clergy who rail against the government. They should not however be surprised to discover that associating themselves with minority partisan views in their official roles will speed the decline of their congregations. Nor should they look hurt when those they criticise examine the Church's actions and investments to see if they reflect the left wing political opinions they espouse. Church properties do not help reduce our carbon footprint, nor are they made available to house the many new arrivals the Church supports.