

Church of England is blighted by bureaucracy

SIR – [Emma Thompson](#) is right to be worried for the survival of the Church of England.

Having been involved in the Diocese of York and locally for well over 40 years, I have become disillusioned by the managerialism and centralisation, which miss the point and undo centuries of good work. The Church is now run in the same manner as the NHS or local government.

Richard Grunwell

Scalby, North Yorkshire

SIR – Emma Thompson rightly expresses unease about the Church's bishops. Justin Welby and his appointments assistant, Caroline Boddington, have overseen the advancement to the episcopate of a procession of evangelicals, too often possessing little knowledge of Catholic Anglicanism, its history, theology, liturgy and spirituality. Scholars and Catholic-minded Anglicans are apparently not considered for bishoprics.

The result is a disastrous over-weighting of the episcopate to one viewpoint. Furthermore, bishops are recruited to be administrators instead of being pastors, spiritual teachers and theologians. Those who would make learned, pastoral bishops are in many cases toiling in parishes. Until they are promoted to the episcopal bench, the Church will fail its more traditional members. Prayer, sacramental worship and solid doctrinal teaching are the only firm foundation.

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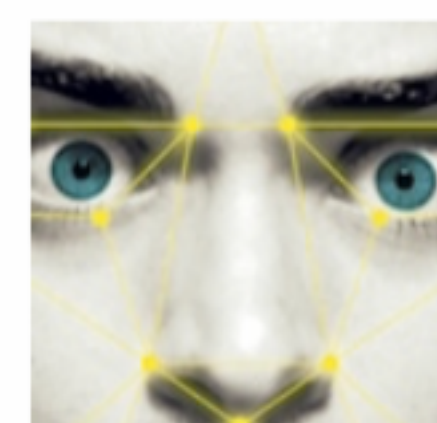
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SIR – I am a member of the “part-time clergy” described by Sue Lansdale [\(Letters, October 24\)](#).

In our rural deanery, we have five parishes in vacancy, and another five to become vacant soon. Clergy are travelling long distances to maintain services, and stipendiary clergy are increasingly reliant on a few non-stipendiary priests, some of whom are of advancing years. Until now I have given my time freely, sometimes taking three services on a Sunday. But as I am 77, this is not sustainable.

There will have to be a greater reliance on the laity to take non-eucharistic services, but many of these people are also elderly. The alternative is to close churches, which the authorities seem to favour but will cause uproar among parishioners.

Rev Alan Wright

Barton on Humber, Lincolnshire

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