

Church of England can still strike the right note

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At times such as the Queen's death the CofE has a vital role

In contrast to Rod Liddle's rather downbeat article on the decline of Christianity (Comment, last week), my own experience of a certain sort of Church of England worldliness is more endearing. Several years ago I was at a memorial service for an old friend. As the service ended, Elvis Presley's *Heartbreak Hotel* shattered the silence, in recognition of my friend's wishes.

As we filed out, I commented to the vicar on how unusual the finale had been. "Ah yes," he agreed, and then, hands clasped, eyes raised heavenwards, he added, "One does feel that *Return to Sender* might have been more appropriate."

*Gordon Bonnyman
Frant, East Sussex*

Gospel truth

As an older member of a thriving non-denominational church, may I offer a suggestion to CofE leaders struggling with declining numbers? Forget your

gimmicks in church. Instead, begin reading through the gospels to your congregation every Sunday (Mark is a good place to start), and comment on what is there before you.

This approach will transform not only your church, but you as well.

Good without God

Liddle must have gone to Damascus for his holiday. He

berates humanists for welcoming the decline of the church without putting anything in its place. All my observations suggest that our young people are level-headed model citizens with a clear notion of right and wrong – achieved without the malign influence of organised religion or by prostrating themselves before a deity. And hurrah to that.

Alan Jones, Pewsey, Wiltshire

Don't blame vicars

Liddle's crocodile tears over the decline of Christianity and his placing the blame on trendy vicars fails to convince.

It's true that foolish people are sometimes appointed ministers in the Anglican church, but Rod would only need to sample a few churches to find a minister who was thoughtful and able both to deliver significant wisdom in their sermons and comfort to their flock in times of crisis.

*Keith Ardron, churchwarden
St James the Great
Cranham, Gloucestershire*

Orthodox view

Let me congratulate Liddle on his excellent column. He will, however, be heartened to hear that what church growth there is here is not confined to the Pentecostal and evangelical churches.

I am a former Anglican priest, but for the past 18 months I have been worshipping in the Orthodox

church in Lincoln and have seen a significant growth in numbers. It appears that people are being drawn in by the wisdom of the ages rather more than by the wisdom of this passing age.

Dr Jim Wellington, Newark

Smiting the wicked

I have a space in my time machine for Liddle so that he can visit the Christian Britain whose passing he so mourns. I am sure he will appreciate the capital punishment, witch-burning, slavery and bear-baiting – so much more wholesome than the "moral wilderness" of our godless 21st century.

John Burns, Bromley

Modern-day damnation

I guess that in the vacuum left by Christianity's decline we have the rise of trans, climate change, Trumpism and other causes in which adherents seek to find that sense of belonging. No shortage of fire and brimstone, either.

Phil Macdonald, Oldham