

## **Christianity and conservatism: trust, civil society, enterprise and internationalism<sup>1</sup>**

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*As a form of political reasoning and practice, conservatism has much to commend it. Its characteristic focus on the what, why and how questions of conservation provides a helpful guide for thinking about politics. Attentive to these questions and inspired by Christian political thought, this vision of conservatism emphasises trust, both divine and creaturely; the interrelation of civil society with government; responsible enterprise; and sober internationalism.*

### **Introduction**

The goal of this *Ethics in Brief* is not to make the case to vote Conservative at the 2015 election but to articulate a vision for conservatism which is inspired by Christian thought. Such a vision *might* encourage Christians to vote for, join and reform the Conservative Party. But it would be equally successful if it informed those with an opposing or no party allegiance of the strengths and weaknesses of the tradition and contemporary face of conservatism and the Conservative Party.

The Conservative Party has never been an officially Christian party but has long been informed by Christian thought and practice. From a contemporary perspective, both national and global, politics cannot afford to ignore such influences nor those of other religious traditions. From schooling to prison reform, from the burgeoning Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches to the Church of England, and from international development to geopolitics God is always on the scene. Political parties will serve people better if they do not neglect this, especially when distinguishing *between* religious traditions, a form of wisdom which is very necessary today in our globally intersecting environment. Religious literacy is an essential – not just desirable – feature of any plausible claim to political leadership in the twenty-first century.

### *History and diversity*

Analysing the relationship between British political conservatism and Christianity will mean entering a conversation constituted by centuries of thought and practice. The conversation has at times assumed that the match between conservatism and Christianity sits so deep within British national life that it is unnecessary to articulate its significance. Indeed, one Conservative MP retiring in 2015, James Arbuthnott, felt that he had to disguise his lack of faith and could only ‘come out’ as an atheist on the floor of the House of Commons when he had already announced his intention to stand down.<sup>2</sup>

He is not alone. There have always been significant challenges to the marriage of conservatism and Christianity. A long-standing sceptical tradition of conservatism has recommended various degrees of separation. Non-conservative but deeply Christian voices have urged divorce. In 2015, far gone are the days when the Church of England was regarded as the Conservative Party at prayer. Recent trends towards secularisation and religious diversification have changed the Party’s demeanour. Its membership is, like the rest of the population, less aligned with religious faith – let alone established Anglican Christian faith – than a hundred or even thirty years ago. Importantly, a wider range of religious faiths now play a part both in UK national life and the Conservative Party, from Islam to Roman Catholicism.

To provide some context for Arbuthnott’s declaration, consider two approaches which have arisen in the history of British conservatism. Both are intellectually and historically respectable but offer different angles on conservatism and the Conservative Party. First, there is a conservatism which is atheist or, at least, agnostic, well-represented by

another retiring MP, David Willetts. On this view, conservatism does not benefit from reference to God but is sufficiently supplied by examination of the nature of humanity alongside principled and pragmatic decision-making.<sup>3</sup> Second, there is a stream of conservatism guided and sharpened by theological commitments. Edmund Burke, Benjamin Disraeli and the Cecils (Robert and Hugh) were, in sometimes controversial ways, deeply influenced by Christian thought.<sup>4</sup> Today, the discussion threads of the website, ConservativeHome, are replete with politico-theological comment.

### *Questions of conservation*

It is natural for conservatives to consider some of this history because it focuses conversation on *what* should be conserved from the past. They want to discover what aspects of their nation's tradition should be treasured and developed and, conversely, what should be downgraded and terminated. Attention to history avoids abstraction and, while allowing for 'big ideas', focusses on questions of practical politics. But beyond this *what* question, such conservatives want to know *how* and ultimately *why* they should conserve whatever it is that they value. These *what*, *how* and *why* questions are what I will call the 'questions of conservation'. For such conservatives, asking and answering these is what political wisdom is – selectively and judiciously retrieving, maintaining and developing, sometimes innovatively, certain features of a society's life, knowing how and why one is doing so.

These 'questions of conservation' imply that conservatives are inherently open to change. To decide what, why and how to conserve is also to decide what can and should change. Conservatives should make *judgments* about what they conserve and that process of judgment necessarily entails that some things are not conserved. The idea of political 'judgment' requires explanation. Oliver O'Donovan defines it as an '*act of moral discrimination that pronounces upon a preceding act or existing state of affairs to establish a new public context*'.<sup>5</sup> Note especially that it is the *preceding act or existing state of affairs* which is to be judged. Judgment is inherently *retrospective* since the present is always becoming the past. But judgment is also *prospective*, focussed on the future – it is a *new public context* which is established, in intelligible relation to the old but nonetheless distinct. For example, the British parliament's decision to extend the democratic franchise in the Reform Act of 1832 was a judgment that conserved parts of the old system as good, but not others. Changes were made to establish a new public context which was judged better than what was previously in existence. The fact that this Act faced opposition from 'conservative' quarters shows that conservatism is not always willing to make changes for the better. But the desire to conserve is compatible with many forms of change. Innovation is essential to a conservatism which addresses contemporary challenges.<sup>6</sup>

Continually asking and answering the questions of conservation – 'what' to conserve (and what to change), 'why' and 'how' – is the heart of a wise conservatism. This process of questioning provides the conditions for well-ordered practical reasoning about politics. Just as a person's heart must keep pumping, so these questions must keep on being asked and answered or else conservatism will seize up and die. But these questions need structure if their answers are not to be simply arbitrary. Vigour and structure for conservatism's heart comes from its major arteries. The ones principally considered here are trust, civil society and internationalism. They frame questions of public policy which have faced and will face us, such as marriage, constitutional reform, economic life and European policy.

### **Trust**

The first artery is trust, a subtle feature of life which opens up the very meaning of conservatism and the purpose of the Conservative Party. For the sake of this theological discussion, trust should be understood under a double aspect: divine trust and creaturely trust.

#### *Divine trust*

The eighteenth century MP, Edmund Burke, often thought of as a 'conservative', held that people with any degree of political power ought to be 'strongly and awefully impressed with an idea that they act in trust' and must account to God for their behaviour.<sup>7</sup> To elaborate, consider two basic claims of Christian faith. First, the Psalmist sings for joy because 'The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all its people; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters'.<sup>8</sup> All the earth, all the non-human natural world and all the nations belong to God because they were created by God. This is God's *good* creation which is, accordingly, a worthy object of the questions of conservation.

Second, Christianity holds that this good creation became imperfect because of human sin and oppression. Humanity's own imperfection is a permanent feature of this sorry state of affairs, contributing to a failure to know the world rightly and a concomitant failure to seek justice in action. The reality of imperfection and sin, along with the ambiguous status that this gives government as an institution providentially given by God to order a fallen world, is a key dimension of a plausible conservative political theology. The good news of the gospel is that now 'in [Christ] all things hold together' (Colossians 1:17). The work of God is not to dispense with the world but to bring its disparate parts into harmony under one head, Jesus the crucified and risen Lord. Just so the creation, including all that has emerged in human life – all political traditions, parties and institutions, all businesses and markets, all art, music and culture of every form, all voluntary societies and associations, all hospitals, schools, universities, prisons and emergency services, all forms of transport, all families and the entire civil service – indeed, all things, tangible and intangible, belong to God. All these things have good purposes in human life which have to be sought out, conserved and developed until Christ's return.

Christianity claims that the creation, though fallen, is an inheritance, a trust which is entrusted to human creatures by God the Father and Jesus Christ. Humans have been entrusted with a world which they are called to conserve and so glorify God, benefit each other and maintain the non-human creation. This primary form of trust permeates all others – our accountability to God in trust is always an accountability for how we have handled that trust for each other and the non-human world. So when we ask 'why conserve anything?' the basic Christian answer is that God entrusts us with a trust, a good, though fallen creation now held together in Christ.

The very goodness of the yet fallen world provides the rationale for conservation. The presupposition of the world's imperfection, especially humanity's sorry state, combines with the affirmation of creation's continued goodness to inspire conservative action.

#### *Creaturely trust*

Trust takes four creaturely forms, all of which derive from divine trust.

First, there are *inherited trusts* received from past generations. Just as God has given us the world as a trust so we pass on what we perceive to be goods as trusts. Political liberty is an inherited trust, passed on from those who fought and died in the two world wars in order to preserve the United Kingdom against mighty enemies. The National Health Service, opposed by Conservatives in the post-war period, was bequeathed to later generations as a trust to be conserved and developed for the sake of the common good. There are also many other inherited trusts which, though not held in common nationally like the NHS or the BBC, are still communal in their orientation. There are family businesses and family wealth, community organisations, local parks, charitable institutions, schools and many other goods things which are passed on as inherited trusts. Unlike God's gifts, however, what is passed on generation to generation is not always good. The UK's current vast debt burden is unlikely to be received as a token of affection by children yet unborn.

Second, inherited trusts engender what we will call *intergenerational trust*. Such trust is an active, attitudinal relationship which is *mediated by inherited trusts*, subsisting between older and younger generations and also between the dead, the living and those yet to come. The dead of the Somme, the Battle of Britain and D-Day stand in this relation to us as do pioneers of public healthcare. Intergenerational trust grows precisely through the reception of goods from past generations which have sought the good of future generations. The knowledge that you have been *cared for* and *loved* by your elders is the soil in which this intergenerational trust grows. This trust lies deep within conservatism and humanity itself as it reflects the bond between God and creation.

Third, there is trust as it exists now between current living members of our community and nation. This *social trust* is distinct from, though often dependent on, the two other inter-human forms of trust. It consists in that mutual reliance on others which leads people into enduring long-term commitments such as marriage, extended family, business, political parties and institutions, charitable activities and religious groups. Of course, some of the people from whom we have received an inherited trust will still be living with us and so, in that sense, intergenerational trust exists in the contemporary moment as one form of social trust. But social trust in general *grows out of* the way we have been treated by those around us, especially those older than us, and then *flows into* our relationships with our contemporaries.

Such an account of trust holds universal appeal but draws deeply on conservative instincts. Many conservatives, whether theologically informed or not, will recognise instantly that to receive good things as an inherited trust and to pass them on in good order to the next generation is basic to a life well lived. Such conservatives believe that we are constituted by our social relationships and especially our family, locality, religious grouping and nation. In these settings we learn human interdependence. We do not make contracts with our parents at birth but rather, as infants, depend upon them to do us good. In this way we learn to trust. Trust anchors us in this reality and prevents flights of fancy into abstract utopianism or fictional social contracts which ignore the frailty and temporal quality of human life. Trust in the collective wisdom and foresight of previous generations is often wiser than merely one's own generation's understanding. The accumulation of many generations' understandings offers more stability to society than the ideas of the moment. The past's wisdom is itself a trust we need in order to handle the goods we receive in trust and so act wisely in the present and into the future.

Inherited trusts, intergenerational trust and social trust are core to conservatism, as Burke understood. But none of this implies uncritical acceptance. For the very idea of holding an inheritance as a trust implies responsibility for properly assessing and stewarding it. Trust is not uncritical or unintelligent but rather ready to make judgments in order to conserve the inheritance. Critical conservatism takes seriously the practice of judgment. Government makes judgments about inherited trusts just as, in an analogous way, families make judgments about an inheritance. To be in a relationship of trust is not necessarily simply to maintain in its current state the inherited trust bequeathed to us. Our true obligation to our forebears is expressed precisely through critical judgment on such trusts. Effective judgment, looking both to the past and the future, creates the conditions, 'the new public context', where trust itself can be renewed as together we gain greater clarity about the value and purpose of our inheritance and the rationale for its critical conservation. The extent to which private actors, such as charities and businesses, can enhance the quality of our inherited NHS – if at all – is one such judgment.

Such an account stands in effective opposition to the Thatcherite-preferred economist Friedrich Hayek's dismissal of conservatism as being naturally unable to 'offer an alternative to the direction in which [a society is] moving'.<sup>9</sup> Such a conservatism also doubts Hayek's confidence that 'moral beliefs concerning matters of conduct' can be properly privatised and sealed off from wider social concerns without evacuating those moral beliefs of their power to provide the conditions in which an economy can flourish.<sup>10</sup> For many contemporary conservatives, it is trust-filled relationships which we value as we work for the good of generations yet unborn, honour the memory of our parents and, for some, live within a church tradition which fills our lives with colour, purpose and inspiration for public service. We understand that there are covenants of trust which permeate generations. These are not only familial or ecclesial but also social and political. When we contribute to and reform a long-standing communal project such the NHS or an established wealth-creation organisation, we are seeking to hold responsibly and critically a trust inherited from previous generations.

### *Marriage and trust*

Let me take an example to illustrate the point. The growth of suspicion directed towards Christianity and Christians was given energy by the governments led by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown.<sup>11</sup> These two Christian socialists became almost as distrusted by many Christians as Margaret Thatcher did by the left-leaning leadership of the 1980's Church of England. A deep ignorance of Christians' lives was endemic among leading voices in New Labour. Their religious illiteracy and ideological antipathy resulted in employment law which enforced a government-sponsored concept of equality upon all religious organisations. This leaden-footed approach understood little of the subtlety of religious organisations and showed profound disrespect for great religious traditions. The most bizarre move was the (unamended) Equality Act's idea of dividing employees of Christian organisations into two groups: one for those who spent most of their time teaching and performing ritual functions in the church – the ministers, vicars, etc.; the other for those who did not spend most of their time doing this. Churches and other Christian organisations were allowed to use moral tests to 'discriminate' (in the language of the Equality Act) over appointments of the first kind but not with respect to the second.

The obvious problems with this approach were that (i) most vicars, curates and youth workers do not spend most of their time teaching and performing rituals and (ii) that organisations require doctrinal and moral integrity across their entire staff team in order to function effectively. However, a little-observed feature was their quite unconscious, un-progressive attempt 'to turn the clock back' to darker days when Christian people were separated into two classes – the religious or clerical leadership on one side and the rest on the other.

Equality was debased in New Labour's hands and ended up being used to crush diversity, the very thing they had intended to promote. The idea that any group – such as Catholic or other traditionalist churches – might think differently from the government on issues in human sexuality met with strong opposition.

Ironically, the Conservative-led coalition have, whether consciously or not, aped New Labour's approach. Consider the Coalition's Equal Marriage 'consultation' exercise which did not ask *whether* the government should bring forward legislation to make it possible in law for people of the same sex to marry but rather *how* this should be done. The point here is not the moral rights or wrongs of the substance of the Equal Marriage Act, which would be a subject for another occasion.<sup>12</sup> Rather, the issue is the ignorance shown towards churches and marriage as inherited trusts. At the heart of the problem was the government's use of the term 'religious marriage'. It was intended to mark out marriages solemnised or begun in settings such as Church of England or Roman Catholic churches.

The crucial missing distinction is that, for these churches, there is no such thing as a 'religious marriage' *in addition to* something else called 'civil marriage'. There may be different *ceremonies* – some civil and some religious – but there is one institution, passed on generation to generation. There are variations in the way marriage looks but not a variation as to whether it requires members of the opposite sex to join together. To adapt a phrase deployed by various Conservatives including Iain Duncan Smith, who eventually gave his support to the Equal Marriage Act, 'there is such a thing as marriage; it's just not the same as a ritual'. In assuring the faithful that 'religious marriage' was being preserved, the Conservative-led coalition government showed that they did not actually understand what they were doing; or if they did, then they were proceeding in a highly cynical manner, unworthy of a British government. I set the second option aside as unfairly imputing false motives. Instead, it is enough to observe that the Christian idea of marriage as the most basic inherited trust, a social institution which pre-exists the state and which is not subject to legal positivism, has become obscured in the understanding of many in the political elite.

However, there is no Christian wisdom to be found in *complaining* about being misunderstood by elites. Such a victim posture is not the vocation of churches. Churches should use the extensive political liberty they enjoy to witness to an alternative way of living characterised by the grace, mercy and moral wisdom found in Jesus Christ.

For Christian liberty is not dependent on 'religious freedom' as such.<sup>13</sup> Though it is good for governments to promote the flourishing of religious faith and the pre-political institutions such as marriage to which, alongside many other churches, the Church of England bears witness in its official teaching documents, it is not a necessary condition for the fruitful work of the Kingdom of God. Christians must not fall into the statist trap of becoming a supplicant people, praying to government for scraps. Creaturely life and human redemption is guaranteed not by national tradition or government but by the promises of Almighty God which received their decisive 'yes' in Christ Jesus. Social trust and trust in Christ, the Creator of true social life, will grow best when the churches live by this gospel so that the overflow of their Spirit-filled faith enriches the communities, neighbourhoods and institutions in which they dwell.<sup>14</sup>

### **Government, civil society and enterprise**

The second artery of the conservative heart is a distinction between government and civil society. Roger Scruton, the conservative political philosopher, argues that the core of a people's life is 'a non-political idea of membership'.<sup>15</sup> This membership is 'non-political' in the sense that it does not, in itself, depend on the coercive power of government. Government may protect such membership but government does not create it. Government may represent such membership but government does not conscript it. When, as parodied above, contemporary Conservatives say 'there is such a thing as society; it's just not the same thing as the state',<sup>16</sup> they are gesturing in this direction.

#### *Civil Society*

'Civil society' captures forms of belonging which are substantial but non-political. Phillip Blond describes civil society as 'everything that ordinary citizens do that is not reducible to the imposed activities of the central state or the compulsion and determination of the marketplace'.<sup>17</sup> With the important proviso that the marketplace is not *essentially* uncivil, a point we will revisit later, this is a helpful summary. The kind of creaturely expressions of community which constitute civil society include families, churches, charities, credit unions, friendships, musical

traditions, trade unions, businesses, literary circles, lunch clubs, sports teams and educational institutions of various sorts. These are the 'little platoons' of which Edmund Burke famously wrote. Of most importance in these last five years have been the advances in education policy, allowing much greater flexibility for parents, teachers, charities and religious organisations of various sorts to bring their wisdom to bear on educating the young. While failures in such a policy are inevitable, the large number of successes will, over time, come to outweigh these precisely because they draw on the ingenuity of a free people who desire what is good for their children and the children of others.

### *Constitutional change*

What is civil society's importance for the constitution of the nation? A distinction between state and civil society combined with a belief in the wisdom held in civil society institutions puts an effective check on the ambitions of a strong state. A strong civil society allows for slow, considered change rather than sudden, radical upheaval, upheaval which can be particularly dangerous to those who are not protected by wealth or position.

A key conservative question for the UK is how the conditions for the maintenance of a rich, strong and diverse civil society may be protected constitutionally. The monarchy represents civil society by being a family affair which, while holding political authority, does not exercise it coercively. Instead, it invests itself not in party politics but in the many forms of civil society, thus conserving civil society's manifold strengths. But a second key form of protection for civil society is an unelected House of Lords. Although this topic will not raise the electorate's pulse level, it remains vital. The disastrous fate of the Conservative-led Coalition's proposals for reform of the House of Lords during 2010-2015 is to be warmly welcomed by those who care about slow change and civil society. However, as with the question of Scottish independence, people should not be surprised if this question resurfaces in the aftermath of the 2015 election. The substantial conceptual question concerns legitimacy. The presupposition behind a substantially, predominantly or wholly elected House of Lords is that it will have greater legitimacy because all voters are equally entitled to elect many or all of those who will be making the law that all will equally be under. However, some powerful officials clearly have legitimacy without being elected, such as judges, whose judgements set precedent and form case law. Not even the USA – that most self-consciously democratic of nations – allows the people to decide directly on Supreme Court appointments.

The Lords will be seen as legitimate if they rightly judge what will conserve the common good of the people, ensuring that legislation is conceived and drafted with attention to the many dimensions of civil society from which the Lords are drawn, including the Church of England and many other religious groups. While a second chamber should not by convention stop the elected government of the day, it should prevent government from pushing through legislation too quickly. An elected Lords would destroy one of our constitution's key barriers against the sectional interest and party ambition whereby people forget or wilfully ignore the nature of wider civil society and the inherited trusts which society enjoys.

### *Enterprise*

All this attention to trust and civil society may strike some as implausible considering the Conservative Party's record in recent decades. Someone might say, 'Surely the Conservatives believe, first and last, in the free market? And the free market has no instinctive respect for the past but operates by creative destruction. So what's all this talk about *conservation*?' This is indeed a widespread perception of the Conservative Party. And it has more than a grain of truth, especially in the neo-liberal strand which has lately been prominent. But conservatism has typically supported economic activity in relation to the social fabric. Scratch beneath the surface and most conservatives will say that the meaning of markets is not found within markets themselves. The idea of an omnipotent, omniscient and omnicompetent free market is neither a necessary nor even a very prevalent dogma of the Conservative Party or conservatism. Even those who believe that the market can answer a wide range of national questions believe that the market is an aspect of conservation, a daily plebiscite deciding on what should be conserved rather than a daily revolution, overturning all established valuations.

The Conservative Party should rightly remain the party of enterprise and personal responsibility. Moreover, these are far from being alien to Christianity but fulfil the creation mandate to steward the earth justly and make it fruitful. This is why a focus on a strong and flexible economy which gives opportunity for employment and enrichment is a proper goal of a Christian politics. A dependency culture may make the rich feel better about their wealth but will not help people who can work to provide for themselves. Christian conservatives will rightly encourage wealth creation and fair employment in conjunction with profitability and robust competition. But

conserving wealth creation serves a higher goal, namely conserving people and communities. Businesses may become uncompetitive because of global markets beyond the control of employees. But people survive the failure of businesses. Civil society, represented by the state, must be on hand to conserve them alongside fresh business enterprises which serve genuine needs in the market. Of course state action to conserve those without work or in ill health is itself made possible by those who create wealth and are taxed accordingly thereby ameliorating, to some extent, the effects of intergenerational disadvantages. But again, the way to overcome intergenerational failures, such as massive debt problems, is not increasing debt but rather enterprise and wealth creation, whereby as many as possible find meaningful work to pursue. Unmanageable debts are no part of Christian or indeed any wisdom tradition. But creating opportunity, wealth, freedom *and* social protection, amidst a fallen world, are honourable Christian goals.

### **International affairs**

One cannot speak of business and employment without addressing international affairs. The character of a nation-state's appearance on the international stage is formed by the quality of its government and civil society but especially by its trade and diplomacy. Political theology from the book of Revelation to today has warned against trusting in trade or in alliances rather than trusting in God. A nation's best hope remains faith in Jesus Christ. Grand plans for international integration, however well-intentioned, appear in a murky light as covert bids for domination. However, there is also good theological reason for scepticism towards a pull-up-the-drawbridge nationalism which fails to see the purposes of Providence operating above and between all nations.

Such crude anti-internationalism exists today as an unwise underside of British political life, particularly in the context of the threat of UKIP. Euroscepticism has a proper place in conservative thought. Without pronouncing on the European project as a whole, there are good reasons for doubting the long-term benefits of laws which do not arise in a way which people can understand or recognise as their own. Conservatives have typically been localists and defenders of national sovereignty because they believe that only those laws which arise within the local or national context in which people live will have the capacity to have a purchase on people's wills. Burke, like most conservatives, had no inherent disrespect for those beyond the British Isles but regarded national sovereignty and the rule of law with reverence. Conservatives are concerned that a nation's laws, wherever they are made, should not fall into disrepute.

However, none of this entails that Conservatives should not be engaged in international cooperation and large international institutions like those associated with the European Union. The threat of UKIP is that the resentment widely felt about the EU will not only prevent EU reform but also inspire a wider disengagement from world affairs. UKIP's lack of sensible comment regarding the ongoing crises in Ukraine and Syria should be a warning signal to Christians who are called to care about the *nations* as well as *this* nation. The UK's responsibilities to the human community remain as strong as ever: to project military power in service of the innocent oppressed who need it; to share wealth with the poorest; to build trade relations for the good of all; and respectfully to promulgate values among the nations while humbly though critically learning from each one.

### **Conclusion**

The heart of conservatism beats with critical trust, civil society, responsible enterprise and sober internationalism. It is this vision which *may* commend itself to some Christians' political consciousness in this election year and, crucially, in the years between elections when government will require the prayers and participation of all the people if it is to know and seek the common good.

## Suggested Further Reading

- Michael Alison and David L. Edwards, eds., *Christianity and Conservatism* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1990).
- Phillip Blond, *Red Tory: How the Left and Right Have Broken Britain and How We Can Fix It* (Faber and Faber, 2010).
- Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Oxford University Press, 1999).
- Anthony Quinton, *The Politics of Imperfection: The Religious and secular traditions of conservative thought in England from Hooker to Oakeshott* (Faber and Faber, 1978).
- Roger Scruton, *The Meaning of Conservatism* (Macmillan, 1984).
- David Willetts, *The Pinch: How the baby-boomers took their children's future and why they should give it back* (Atlantic Books, 2002).

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- <sup>1</sup> This essay draws on Joshua Hordern, *One Nation but Two Cities: Christianity and the Conservative Party* (Bible Society/KLICE, 2010).
- <sup>2</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-30848534>.
- <sup>3</sup> David Willetts, *The Pinch* (Atlantic Books, 2002), 86. For a similar approach, though one less sympathetic to religion, see Anthony Quinton, *The Politics of Imperfection* (Faber and Faber, 1978).
- <sup>4</sup> For an interpretation of the history of the Conservative Party, see Part One of Joshua Hordern, *One Nation but Two Cities*.
- <sup>5</sup> Oliver O'Donovan, *The Ways of Judgment* (Eerdmans, 2005), 7.
- <sup>6</sup> Roger Scruton, *The Meaning of Conservatism* (Macmillan, 1984), 22ff.
- <sup>7</sup> Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (OUP, 1999), 86.
- <sup>8</sup> Psalm 24:1-2
- <sup>9</sup> Friedrich Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (The University of Chicago Press, 1960), Appendix 'Why I am not a Conservative', section 1.
- <sup>10</sup> *ibid.* section 3.
- <sup>11</sup> For evidence to support this claim, see Francis Davis et al., *Moral, But No Compass – Government, Church and the Future of Welfare*, (Matthew James Pub. Ltd, 2008).
- <sup>12</sup> For commentary critical of the Coalition, see Julian Rivers, 'Redefining marriage: the case for caution', *Cambridge Papers* 21.3 (September 2012) <http://www.jubilee-centre.org/redefining-marriage-the-case-for-caution/>; Andrew Goddard, 'Reframing the Same-Sex Marriage Debate', *Ethics in Brief* 18.4 (Spring 2013) <http://klice.co.uk/uploads/Ethics%20in%20Brief/Goddard%20v.18.4.pdf>. For a critical view of the Church of England's opposition to Equal Marriage, see Nigel Biggar, 'Men and Women in Marriage: Does it Add Up?', *Theology* 117.2, (March/April 2014), 94-99.
- <sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, I note that the Conservative-led Coalition chose to oppose the Christian plaintiffs in four religious liberty cases considered by the European Court of Human Rights in 2013. For commentary see Mark Campbell, 'Strasbourg, Conscience and Religious belief', *Ethics in Brief* 18.5 (Summer 2013).
- <sup>14</sup> See Joshua Hordern, *Political Affections: Civic Participation and Moral Theology* (Oxford University Press, 2013), chapter 5.
- <sup>15</sup> Roger Scruton, 'In defence of the nation' in *The Philosopher on Dover Beach* (Carcenet, 1990), 299-328, 303.
- <sup>16</sup> Gary Streeter, ed., *There is Such a Thing as Society* (Politico's Publishing, 2002).
- <sup>17</sup> Phillip Blond, *Red Tory: How the Left and Right Have Broken Britain and How We Can Fix It* (Faber and Faber, 2010), 3.