



Welcome to our June newsletter

- ◆ Our plans for Autumn Conference 2022
- ◆ Funding request
- ◆ Romans 13 v 1. Is our current government worthy of respect?
- ◆ Open, Tolerant, United? Tolerance and the challenge culture.
- ◆ Update on our complaint regarding motion F4 at Autumn Conference 2021



Autumn Conference Sept 17th-22nd Brighton

This year, we are finally able to meet in person again. LDCF will be having a stand in the exhibition and so far our plans are:

- ◆ A fringe meeting on tolerance and the 'cancel culture' from a Christian perspective.
- ◆ To host a recording of Tim Farron's 'Mucky Business' podcast. Tim will be interviewing Glen Scrivener—author, minister and digital mission pioneer .
- ◆ Prayer Breakfast—speaker to be announced.
- ◆ LDCF meal—a chance to meet up with other LDCF members.

Our exhibition stand comes with free passes to enable us to staff the stand. These passes give access to the conference but not the right to vote in debates. If you are a member of LDCF, willing to help staff the stand and if a free pass would enable you to attend conference, please email Lizzie by replying to this email. We are keen to help our younger members who would not otherwise be able to attend. The deadline for obtaining the free passes is July 16th.

Help!

Two years of a global pandemic, not being able to meet together at conference or to hold fundraising events have left LDCF in a weakened financial position.

We have big plans for conference but not the financial resources to deliver them. Can you commit to helping LDCF?

We need to raise an additional £6,000 to support our activities for the next 12 months.

£15 now or £2 more per month from every current member will drive us forward. If you can afford more, you will help others who can't.

Click [HERE](#) to donate.

After this time, we hope that continuing, new or increased member contributions and other fund-raising events will support our work.

- ◆ If you currently pay by standing order (thank you!) can you consider increasing your giving? If every member makes a one off contribution of £15, or if you increase your monthly contribution by £2, this would cover the extra we need. You can increase your monthly giving using this [form](#) which also has our bank details if you wish to make a one off donation
- ◆ If you are a member and currently pay via PayPal or Stripe will you consider setting up a standing order? PayPal deduct a significant fee from your donation whereas via standing orders LDCF receive 100%. (We have already changed from PayPal to Stripe for online payments as Stripe charge us less). Click [HERE](#) for the standing order form.
- ◆ If you are receiving our newsletter as a supporter, please consider joining us. The recommended minimum subscription is just £2.50 a month. Our membership form can be found [HERE](#)

With the additional funding, we will be able to run three events at Conference (described within this newsletter) and allow Lizzie to continue building relationships, advocating for us and managing our activities and finances, as she does so well.

Toby Price

Question - anyone else struggling to obey Romans 13 v 1 as a Christian in Britain in 2022?

Let me explain. On election night, I went to see Bill Bailey, the well known comedian. He began his set by describing the current cabinet as **'Lying, drunken, useless, thieves'**. I was taken aback by the huge roar of approval from the thousands in the audience. This was in Liverpool and maybe Tories are in short supply here, but even so, the loudness of the roar surprised me. I don't think of Bill Bailey as being particularly political and presumably the audience didn't come expecting such strong political comment, but Bill continued to attack the cabinet adding that **'4 ants and a can of Red-bull could do a better job'**. He then went on to attack Boris Johnson himself, describing him as **'a toxic hay bale'** and a **'rancid sack of DNA. A hybrid of Prince Joffrey and Shrek'**. (I've never watched Game of Thrones but I'm told that Prince Joffrey is a cowardly sadist. Shrek is a cartoon ogre). I laughed along with them. I found it hard to disagree with any of this. But then I remembered Romans 13 v 1 and began to feel very uncomfortable indeed.

Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God (NLT).

Our Prime Minister and his cabinet have become a laughing stock. I hear people say that although Boris Johnson isn't fit to be PM, they don't see that anyone else in the top tier of government would be any better. It is a truly sad state of affairs. But should we be taking the mickey out of them?. It seems to me that instead, we should be doing what we can to bring an end

to this. Those of us who can, should be putting ourselves forward for election or mentoring and encouraging others to do so. Most importantly of all we can all pray. Not only that the current government would have a change of heart, but that God will raise up politicians who care more about people than they do about gaining power. I look at the current government and regret that so few Christians consider it important to stand for election. Thank you for being members of LDCF, for being a person who does stand up or supports those who do.

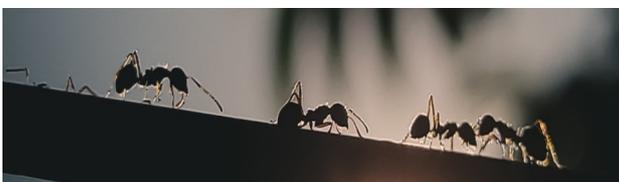
Lizzie Jewkes
LDCF Director

The Question

Erm, well – I begin, shifting nervously in my chair
if it's true there is no heaven and no hell,
no eternity or long hereafter,
no divine plan or offstage direction from an invisible hand,
then how do we make sense of it all,
how do we make our way through this life,
this glorious, ridiculous, ramshackle world of ours,
with its wars and brutality, conflicts and petty arguments,
the ten thousand tiny acts of kindness
which can happen unnoticed before breakfast,
and all that love and pain, happiness and loneliness
that comes to us unannounced, by, turns,
as if we ourselves were pitched daily
onto the waves of one of its vast, mysterious ocean,
not knowing whether today is the day we drown
or we find ourselves washed up
on some strange but friendly shore?

Mmm- you say, after a lengthy silence –
what I meant was do you have any questions
about *the job*?

Brian Bilston



Four ants, possibly in search of a can of Redbull
by Prabir Kashyap on Unsplash

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

'For me, the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, whose birth we celebrate today, is an inspiration and an anchor in my life. A role-model of reconciliation and forgiveness, he stretched out his hands in love, acceptance and healing.'

Elizabeth II, Christmas Address 2014

The Queen has rightly been globally praised for doing an outstanding job since she came to the throne at the age of 25. And for 70 years she's done her work as Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, and Supreme Governor of the Church of England with amazing diligence, great grace, astute intelligence, deep humility, and tremendous effectiveness.

Where does all that come from – the clarity of vision, the stamina, the steadfastness in duty and care? What has shaped and sustained this remarkable stateswoman? While we know very little about what she thinks about a whole host of issues, she has been extraordinarily clear about where her guiding principles come from – though the majority of her biographers have rarely paid serious attention to her words. Her answer can be summed up in one word: Jesus.

It is, as she testifies, Jesus' teaching that has shaped her, Jesus' example that has inspired her, and Jesus' power that has enabled her to do the job God called her to do. We can see it in her actions. The fruit of the Spirit has been rich in her: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. And we hear it in her words. She has repeated-

ly communicated the reality of her own faith in Christ and the difference he has made to her life in a clear and winsome way, most notably in her Christmas addresses. licc in partnership with The Bible Society have produced a book which looks deeply at the character of the Queen's faith: its biblical roots, and her understanding of Jesus and his priorities. And it explores how those have shaped her as a disciple, her vision for her role as sovereign, her vision for the nations and their citizens, and her vision for the Commonwealth. It uses the Queen's Christmas Day broadcasts as a basis to explore the importance of her faith in Jesus to the Queen.

The book is available as a print copy (£10 for 10 copies) or as a free download from: [licc](https://www.licc.org.uk)



Open, Tolerant and United?

Our Party's core statement in 2017 was "*Open, Tolerant and United*" but recently, within the Party we have seen:

- ◆ **A conference debate conducted without any opposing voices allowed**
- ◆ **An attempt to remove a former leader for his views on the Uighurs**
- ◆ **Campaigns attempting to force the resignation of selected candidates**
- ◆ **Attempts to remove from the Party a PPC because of beliefs stated 10 years ago**

A recent Spectator article talked about the growing intolerance of freedom of thought and the inability

to talk across divides. It suggested that the current modus operandi of certain groups is to shut down free speech and enforce their views as the only acceptable ones.



What would Jesus make of this? Was he tolerant or intolerant? When should we 'turn the other cheek' and when should we display 'righteous anger'? How can we, as Christian Liberal Democrats, be inclusive and open to people? WWJD? Should we be intolerant of intolerance? Jesus included a tax collector

and a political activist amongst his disciples. He spoke with the woman at the well, with lepers, Romans and wealthy men. But Jesus also threw the moneylenders out of the temple, demonstrating that there are times when we should be intolerant. In this case, the moneylenders and traders were occupying the only space in the temple complex where non Jews (Gentiles) were permitted to worship God. How would we feel if a market was running in our church during a service? Probably as angry as was Jesus.

Would Jesus try to exclude people who did not agree with him on certain matters? He washed the feet of Judas at the Last Supper, knowing he was about to betray him (John 13:10). This was a remarkable show of tolerance. Would he shy away from this debate or would he challenge the individual and then look to create a way forward that was founded on compassion and inclusiveness?

As recently as January, Party member Michael Taylor wrote a short article about this very topic in [Libdemvoice](#) Michael says *"In our party we expect to disagree about some issues. We are Liberals. It goes with the territory. What is not acceptable is abuse and vilification of those with whom we disagree or calls for their expulsion."*

Current Issues

As you may already know, we recently made a complaint to the Party about a debate held at the Autumn conference about Conversion Therapy. Our argument was not against

the policy but against the way the debate was handled, which shut down all debate. You can read more about our complaint [here]. A recent short article by [Unherd](#) talked of the Liberal Democrats stifling this debate.

We recently contributed a letter to the Government's consultation on the banning of conversion therapy, which you can find on our website [here]. As did a large number of ministers in Oxford, who signed an open letter to the government urging caution in drafting legislation to 'ban conversion therapy'. Their letter made clear that coercion and control should rightly be banned but urged the government to ensure that pastoral conversations should not be criminalised. A number of



activists

nationally picked up on this and have mounted a campaign against the Oxford signatories. Locally Oxford Pride in particular has targeted local ministers and sought to bring pressure to bear on the churches. One local church which uses a community centre has been called to give an account of its position by its landlords.

We believe something needs to be fixed in our Party. We have moved too far towards intolerance, led by small, but vocal, groups.

Now is the time for some re-balancing.

Challenge Culture not Cancel Culture.

We believe that there is a need to find a practical, measurable and evidential way to be tolerant of *people* while being intolerant of their *actions*. We can then choose to be intolerant in a non-personal way in some situations and challenge others who use more aggressive measures.

To quote LDCF executive member and former MP John Pugh ***"It is normal for people whatever side of an argument they are on to feel that they are right and common for people to feel upset when people do not share their opinion. What is disturbing is when a difference of opinion (or even just expression) on an issue that might be contentious is portrayed as a difference in fundamental values when the fundamental values might in fact be shared"***.

We must not be afraid of putting our heads above the parapet, but we should expect opposition and must make sure we are prepared. If not us, then who will?

Toby Price
LDCF Chair

Lizzie Jewkes
LDCF Director

**THE FACT THAT
THERE'S A HIGHWAY TO
HELL AND ONLY A
STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN
SAYS A LOT ABOUT
ANTICIPATED TRAFFIC
NUMBERS.**

I recently came across this graphic and was rather struck by it. But how true is it? Certainly Matthew ch7 v 14 says: *But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*

But does it have to be like this?

In Matthew 18 Jesus is recorded as saying:

In the same way, it is not my heavenly Father's will that even one of these little ones should perish. It is clearly not God's will that anyone should miss the path. My church has been taking part in the global call to pray for our loved ones to come to Christ.

<https://>

www.thykingdomcome.global/

We can go along with the above slogan or we can start praying for those we know and love to find the way.

There's clearly a danger in forming our religious beliefs on quotes from pop songs!

Lizzie Jewkes

F4 Ban Conversion Therapy debate Complaint update

At the Autumn Conference last September, a debate was held calling for a ban on conversion therapy. While we in LDCF are totally opposed to conversion therapy in any form, many of us were concerned at the actual wording of the motion and LDCF among others, submitted amendments to the motion, but FCC declined to take any of them. We now know that at least four cards were submitted to speak against the motion plus two people submitted requests to refer the motion back. (This would mean that the motion would be sent back to the writers who would be asked to rewrite and resubmit the motion).

Six speakers were called to speak in favour of the debate but not one speaker against. We were very concerned at this apparent shutting down of debate within the party. We submitted a complaint to Mark Pack as he is both Party President and Chair of the Federal Board. You can read our complaint [HERE](#) Mark felt we did not make a good case and suggested we contact Nick da Costa direct. You can read his email response [HERE](#) We then submitted our complaint to Nick da Costa who is both the Chair of Federal Conference Committee and had chaired the debate in question. Nick and Chris Adams, vice chair of FCC agreed to meet us via Zoom. Nick accepted that along with significant technical issues,

mistakes had been made in the handling of the debate and has agreed the following changes:

1) To send messages to the four people we know about who wanted to speak against, the motion explaining what happened.

2) To discuss ways with the FCC to 'beef up' the training material for chairs/FCC members, where referencing balanced debates and the ways to handle debates where only a small number of people want to speak against the motion. No change of existing policy.

3) To talk with the FCC about whether the current conference chat stewards could also moderate the Facebook conversations relating to conference debates (rather than the FCC members), to avoid some of the unhelpful chat after this debate and to ensure factual correctness. To ensure bad behaviour and misinformation is handled properly on the conference Facebook forum, in line with all Party social media. We have agreed to meet up in 6 months time to discuss the progress made. We will be holding a fringe meeting at conference to discuss tolerance and how we can disagree well without falling out.

Toby & Lizzie

