

Top-heavy Church must slim down to survive

SIR – The concerns [raised](#) by Emma Thompson are echoed in the [letter](#) from Sue Lansdale, and by the rapidly growing campaign Save the Parish.

The Church of England deserves to be preserved for our children. But it is clearly in decline, and those at the top of its hierarchy are only hastening its demise by pouring money – our money – into “growth” projects that are providing no visible benefit and simply adding to our overheads.

This approach is putting the cart before the horse: before the growth can start the decline has to be stopped. The only way to achieve that is to reduce central costs and thus lift the intolerable burden being imposed on parishes through the notorious “parish share”.

The number of dioceses needs to be reduced. Twenty-six bishops were enough 200 years ago, so how is it possible to justify over 100 today?

Donald R Clarke

Tunbridge Wells, Kent

SIR – When I was growing up the Church of England provided formal signposts for life’s progression: birth, marriage, death and various festivals of thanks in between.

In the last 25 years, however, it has thrown out the pleasing rituals, traditions and obeisances that made involvement enjoyable.

The Church has become ever more trendy in order to appeal to the people it will always struggled to attract: the young. It is also more distant: how many rural parsons are now seen out in the field, or in the local pub? As a consequence of all this, it has become a rather threadbare comfort blanket for the middle-aged and elderly.

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