

Upside-down Church

SIR – Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York, claims the Church of England is “very committed” to supporting and revitalising the local church, and to sustaining clergy numbers ([Comment, December 18](#)). However, James Burnell-Nugent ([Letters, December 31](#)) notes that there are many dioceses in which up to 20 parishes are to be merged into single units.

No Church leader has acknowledged that the reason it is necessary to save money on parishes and priests could have anything to do with costly top-heavy management.

In 1959 the Church employed 13,075 stipendiary clergy and 250 diocesan support staff. There are now 6,500 support staff, most of whom are not ordained and have no contact with places where most Christian good is done, and are often on salaries well in excess of the stipends paid to parish priests. In addition, the Church now employs 116 bishops, despite the fact that when all England’s parishes had their own priest and a large congregation, 26 bishops were capable of looking after them.

This situation is truly upside-down.

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