

‘Future of the Church of England’

Danny Kruger MBE, MP

This is a speech delivered in the House of Commons on Thursday 17th July, 2025, as reported in *Hansard*, vol. 771, cols 520-523. It is worthy of attention for our project as a forthright statement of one traditional Christian view of national identity. We post it here with Mr Kruger’s consent. We also post a response to the speech by Bishop Graham Tomlin.

It is an honour to stand here in this empty Chamber to speak about the original purpose of this space, when it was a chapel in the Church of England. The old Chamber of the House of Commons, on which this space was modelled after the great fire of 1834, was St Stephen’s Chapel – formerly a royal church. It was given by the heirs of Henry VIII to Parliament to serve as its debating Chamber. Madam Deputy Speaker, your Chair stands on the altar steps. The Table with the Dispatch Boxes is where the lectern stood.

I mention that because the link between this place and the Church of England is not merely ceremonial. The Prayers we say here at the start of every day are not just a nod to tradition. Our democracy is founded on Christian faith. This Parliament remains the law-giving power of the Church of England. We in this place have the responsibility to approve or disapprove the doctrine and the rules of the Church, and that is as it should be, because the Church of England is not some private club or just another eccentric denomination. The Church is a chaplain to the nation, and through the parish system, in which every square inch of England has its local church and its local priest, we are all members – we all belong. Even if you never set foot in your church from one year to the next, and even if you do not believe in its teachings, it is your church and you are its member.

When I speak of the Church of England today, I am not speaking about the internal politics of the Anglican sect; I speak of the common creed of our country, the official religion of the English and the British nation, and the institution – older than the monarchy, and much older than Parliament – which made this country. It is no surprise that both the Church and the country itself are in a bad way, divided, internally confused and badly led. The Church is riven by deep disputes over doctrine and governance, and is literally leaderless, with even the process of choosing the next Archbishop of Canterbury unclear, confused and contended. The country itself reflects that – unclear in its doctrines and its governance, profoundly precarious, chronically exposed to threats from without and within. It is at risk economically, culturally, socially and, I would say, morally.

Last month, in the space of three days in one infamous week, this House authorised the killing of unborn children – of nine-month-old babies – and it passed a Bill to allow the killing of the elderly and disabled. I describe those laws in those stark terms not to provoke further controversy, but because those are the facts. We gave our consent to the greatest crime: the killing of the weak and most defenceless human beings. It was a great sin. If, standing here, I have any power to repent on behalf of this House, I hereby repent of what we did.

In the reaction to these votes, and all around us in reaction to the state of the country and the world, something else is happening. There is a great hunger in society for a better way of living, and I want to use this opportunity to explain what that better way is and why we here in England have the means to follow it.

The Jewish and Christian God is a God of nations. He is interested in people as individuals, but also as groups – as communities not only of kinship but of common worship, with a common God. Uniquely among the nations of the world, this nation – England, from which the United Kingdom grew – was founded and created consciously on the basis of the Bible and the story of the Hebrew people. In that sense, England is the oldest Christian country and the prototype of nations across the west. The story of England is the story of Christianity operating on a people to make the institutions and culture that have been uniquely stable and successful.

The western model was forged and refined in England over a thousand years from the 9th to the 19th centuries. What is that model? It is simply this: that power should arrange itself for the benefit of all the people under it, and specifically for the poorest and weakest; that the law is there to protect the ordinary person against the abuse of power; and that every individual has equal dignity and freedom, including, crucially, the freedom of conscience, religion and belief, which makes space for other religions under the Christian shield – a secular space. Indeed, the idea of a secular space is a Christian concept that is meaningful only in a Christian world. These are ideas that only make sense if one accepts that we have some intrinsic value – a value that is given to us and is not of our own making or invention.

Throughout the long years from the time of Alfred to the time of Victoria, it was assumed that a nation was a community of common worship and that our community – this country – worshipped the Christian God. Then, in the 20th century, another idea arose: that it was possible for a country to be neutral about God; that the public square was empty of any

metaphysics; and that the route to freedom lay through the desert of materialism and individual reason – “no hell below us, above us only sky”. That idea was wrong. The horrors of the 20th century attest to that, not least in the west, where we escaped totalitarianism but have suffered our own catastrophes of social breakdown, social injustice, loneliness and emptiness on a chronic scale.

Ugly and aggressive new threats are now arising, because we have found that in the absence of the Christian God, we do not have pluralism and tolerance, with everyone being nice to each other in a godless world. All politics is religious, and in abandoning one religion we simply create a space for others to move into.

Interjection by Andrew Rosindell (Romford) (Con)

My hon. Friend is making a very moving and powerful speech. Our Head of State, who is also the head of the Church of England, represents the rights of all peoples to live in a free society and to worship freely. It is because our Head of State is also the head of our established Church that there are protections for all religions and denominations in our constitution. The cross is on the top of the crown that he wears, which demonstrates that the Christian faith is the basis of our constitution, our customs, our heritage and our British way of life. Does my hon. Friend agree?

My hon. Friend will not be surprised to hear that I do agree with him. He makes the point very well, and I absolutely acknowledge it. The paradox of our constitution is that under a monarchy, we have a system with the most developed political freedom in the world, and that under an established Church, we have a tradition of freedom of conscience and belief in which all religions can be accommodated. It is because the cross is at the centre, and I notice that the cross is above your Chair too, Madam Deputy Speaker.

As I was saying, in abandoning one religion we simply create a space for others to move into as the dominant faiths. There are two religions moving into the space from which Christianity has been ejected, and one is Islam. In a debate yesterday, I said how much I find myself in agreement with Muslim colleagues in Parliament on moral and social matters. But as I have been saying, this is a Christian country – if it is a country at all – and I cannot be indifferent to the extent of the growth of Islam in recent decades.

It is the other religion that worries me even more. This other religion is a hybrid of old and new ideas, and it does not have a proper name. I do not think that “woke” does justice to its seriousness. It is a combination of ancient paganism, Christian heresies and the cult of

modernism, all mashed up into a deeply mistaken and deeply dangerous ideology of power that is hostile to the essential objects of our affections and our loyalties: families, communities and nations. It is explicitly and most passionately hostile to Christianity as the wellspring of the west. That religion, unlike Islam, must simply be destroyed, at least as a public doctrine. It must be banished from public life – from schools and universities, and from businesses and public services. It needs to be sent back to the fringes of eccentricity, like the modern druids who invest Stonehenge in my constituency with a theology that is seen as mad but harmless because its followers are so few and no one serious takes them seriously.

We can no longer pretend, as people did in the 20th century, that we can be neutral or indifferent to God or to the public square being a godless desert. The fact is that the strong gods are back, and we have to choose which god to worship. I suggest we worship the God who came in the weakest form, Jesus Christ. This God is a jealous god – it is him or nothing – and we have to own our Christian story, or repudiate it. Not to own it is to repudiate it, and to repudiate Christianity is not only to sever ourselves from our past, but to cut off the source of all the things we value now and that we need in the future, such as freedom, tolerance, individual dignity and human rights.

Without the Christian God, in whose teaching these things have their source, these are inventions – mere non-existent aspirations. To worship human rights is to worship fairies, but if we own our story and remember the real sources of our civilisation, we can have these things and make them real – real freedom and tolerance and dignity, a culture of love and, crucially, a culture of humanity. We are in the age of the machine, and a great choice confronts us: whether to make machines in the image of fallen man, bent on exploitation and domination with mankind in its sights, or to make them what they properly are, the servants of mankind able to help us make a better world.

To conclude, a wind is blowing, a storm is coming and when it hits we are going to learn if our house is built on rock or on sand, but we have been here before. The reformers of the 11th and the 16th centuries, the Puritans in the 17th century, the Evangelicals in the 19th century all brought this country back from the edge – from idolatry, error or just plain indifference, and from all the social and political crises that indifference to Christianity brought about – and they each in their generation restored this country to itself.

A new restoration is needed now, with a revival of the faith, a recovery of a Christian politics and a re-founding of this nation on the teachings that Alfred made the basis of the common

law of England all those centuries ago. This is a mission for the Church under its next leader, whoever that is; it is a mission for this place – the old chapel that became the wellspring of western democracy – and for us, its Members; and it is a mission for our whole country. It is the route to a prosperous modernity founded on respect for human dignity, responsibility for the created world and the worship of God.

Danny Kruger is Reform UK MP for East Wiltshire. He was elected as a Conservative at the 2024 General Election, moving to Reform UK in September 2025. He was previously Conservative MP for Devizes, from 2019 to 2024, before the boundary change.

Outside of politics his career has been mostly spent working on community projects. In 2006 he and his wife Emma founded 'Only Connect', a charity working in prisons to stop criminals re-offending. He ran this for 10 years and is now its chair. He also set up and ran the West London Zone for Children and Young People, coordinating the work of schools, councils and charities with young people at risk. For his charitable work, Mr Kruger received the MBE in 2017. Prior to being elected to Parliament he also worked in journalism and in politics, including as the chief leader-writer at the Daily Telegraph, as a government adviser on civil society, and as Political Secretary in 10 Downing Street.

He is author of Covenant: the new politics of home, neighbourhood and nation (Forum Press, 2023), which sets out his political thinking in more detail. In 2020 he wrote a report for the Government with detailed proposals for a stronger civil society.