

UK Column

Welby's Church of England 2021: £Trillions for Gaia Greed but Peanuts for the Parish Paupers



by Brian Gerrish and Alex Thomson, Eastern Approaches

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On Wednesday 20 January 2021, UK Column News ran an exclusive [report](#) on a multi-trillion-pound Church of England investment cabal that has existed hidden in plain sight (the sight of the local parish congregations in particular) for circa three years.

Let's just confirm for all our readers that our exclusive news report, and the article title above, is not in error. Yes, we did say **Church of England trillions**. In case you're still not picturing it, let's just confirm that in today's financial conventions, just *one* trillion pounds is **£1,000 billion**, or *£1,000,000,000,000 if you prefer the added noughts*. Here is what a [trillion US dollars](#) stacked up in hundred-dollar bills looks like; that would be just over £700 billion sterling at current exchange rates.

That's a lot of cash and — aside from being able to fund repairs to our crumbling churches — it is enough to tackle hunger and a lot of poverty worldwide, let alone solve these problems in the United Kingdom itself. But the money is not just £1 trillion. It is now rather nearer to £17.12 trillion sterling, or \$23.5 trillion in US dollars, and that is surely quite some collection plate.

So you are a Christian and attend an Anglican congregation? You have sat in a cold church, you have shared concerns over the state of the church roof and fabric, you have done your bit to raise funds locally to help pay for those vital repairs. It has been tough to even draw in enough money to cover the essential work. Donations, gifts, and of course grants have been a Godsend. You've all worked hard and the C of E has helped a bit, but money is never easy to get, and the result is parish churches are simply disappearing as places of worship, or being diluted in shared use to make ends meet. Times are very hard and, well, as people say, with the inevitable look of helplessness, "There's simply not enough money to go around — even the Church of England is strapped for cash."

But you're not a Christian? Please don't stop reading here just because we've opened with ecclesiastical matters. This article is highlighting ideas, plans and agendas that will impact on each and every one of us, whatever our colour or creed — if you have one. And if the Canterbury cash heist shows notable initiative, it also shows a C of E willing to help prop up the "tables of the money lenders" and drink fine wine with them, as they plan a world far removed from God's creation.

So what's Archbishop Justin Welby, "Future Leader" at Lambeth Palace, and the Church of England really up to, and why do we need to know? Read on.

Over recent years, much has been written over the perilous condition of the Church of England estate. Most, if not all, of the 16,000 churches and 42 cathedrals in England alone are suffering hard times, and as we've already said, many have simply been deconsecrated or even demolished as economically not viable. God is all very well, and yes, there are plenty of needy poor people, and there's also sickness, homelessness and hunger, but the stash of cash is only so big. Right? Wrong; that's just what Lambeth Palace would have us believe.

The perilous state of C of E finances in practice has been well reported in newspapers and elsewhere over many years. The *Daily Mail* **headlined** on 1st September 2018 with:

Praise the Lord! New £1.8million plan to stop crumbling churches and other places of worship falling into disrepair

Volunteers will maintain old churches, starting in urban Manchester and Suffolk ...

Churches may double as libraries or community centres used by the community ...

Will take 'stitch-in-time' approach by doing urgent repairs before they get worse ...

The main thrust of the article, apart from emphasising the ecclesiastical dire straights, was the 'hope' given by a £1.8 million grant from government agency Historic England for church repairs and preservation.

The Bishop of Worcester, Dr John Inge, is quoted in the article as saying:

Church buildings are a crucial part of the community life of this nation and provide much-needed social outreach and community facilities. This fund will model a "stitch-in-time" approach, addressing urgent repair needs before they become costlier.

His Grace was either ignorantly unaware of the true state of the church coffers, or was seemingly prepared to help propagate a lie.

At least the Church's arch-enemy, the National Secular Society, was more interested in the truth. On 4 April 2018, they headlined with "[NSS: church repairs scheme inappropriate given C of E's wealth.](#)"

In January NSS representatives met the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and urged the government to take the Church of England's vast wealth into account before handing out any more grants to assist it with building repairs.

In a letter following the meeting the NSS said it agreed that "the nation's heritage buildings are a valuable asset, and those of architectural, cultural and historical significance should be preserved". But it added that the sustainability review "could lead to a situation whereby the church becomes over-reliant on funding from taxpayers despite having clear means to sustain itself through its own existing assets".

Most instances of taxpayer support must show financial need, which includes not only income but also savings and investments. Financial support for the Church of England should also be considered on the same basis and should include the church as a whole rather than simply a single legal entity within it.

Increasing state investment into the church will not ultimately make the church sustainable. Nationalisation makes industries more resistant to change; to be truly sustainable, the church needs to be given the autonomy to change and financially support itself.

The C of E is thought to hold assets in excess of £15bn. Its church commissioners have an £8bn investment portfolio. It also has £4.7bn in dioceses, £1bn in cathedrals and an estimated £1–10bn in parish church councils.

These figures do not include the church's supporting charities, which also have considerable funds available. The church has received at least £810m of public money since 1999 and recently announced plans to spend £24.4m on evangelism projects.

The NSS's letter also went on to comment that the church's fragmented financial structure "means that the true value of its assets goes overlooked".

Gospel or Gaia?

It was against this background of the multi-billions bulging out of the C of E coffers that a short e-mail arrived in the UK Column inbox from a churchgoing member of the public. They had been fascinated to discover that in times of Covid lockdown chaos — with a great many people suffering hardship through family and social isolation, unemployment, lack of medical and mental health care, removal of church fellowship and prayer, as well as a large dose of propagandised fear — the clergy had seen fit to run socially distanced internet courses on "environmental matters and climate change".

Some quick research of the Church of England website quickly revealed that environmental matters and climate change are surprisingly big in the ecclesiastical psyche. Their glaring publicity line [here](#) reads:

The environment and climate change

We believe that responding to climate change is an essential part of our responsibility to safeguard God's creation. Our environmental campaign exists to enable the whole church to address — in faith, practice and mission — the issue of climate change.

The church adds, "We are here to help you take action on the environment. Amazing work is already taking place in churches across the country and we are well

placed to share news, tips and resources."

Alongside the general policy statements came more specific climate action calls:

Net Zero Carbon declaration by General Synod

Support and guidance on getting to Net Zero Carbon

Climate Sunday

as well as major direction from the top level of the Church of England's self-governance, the Synod:

The final motion approved was as follows:

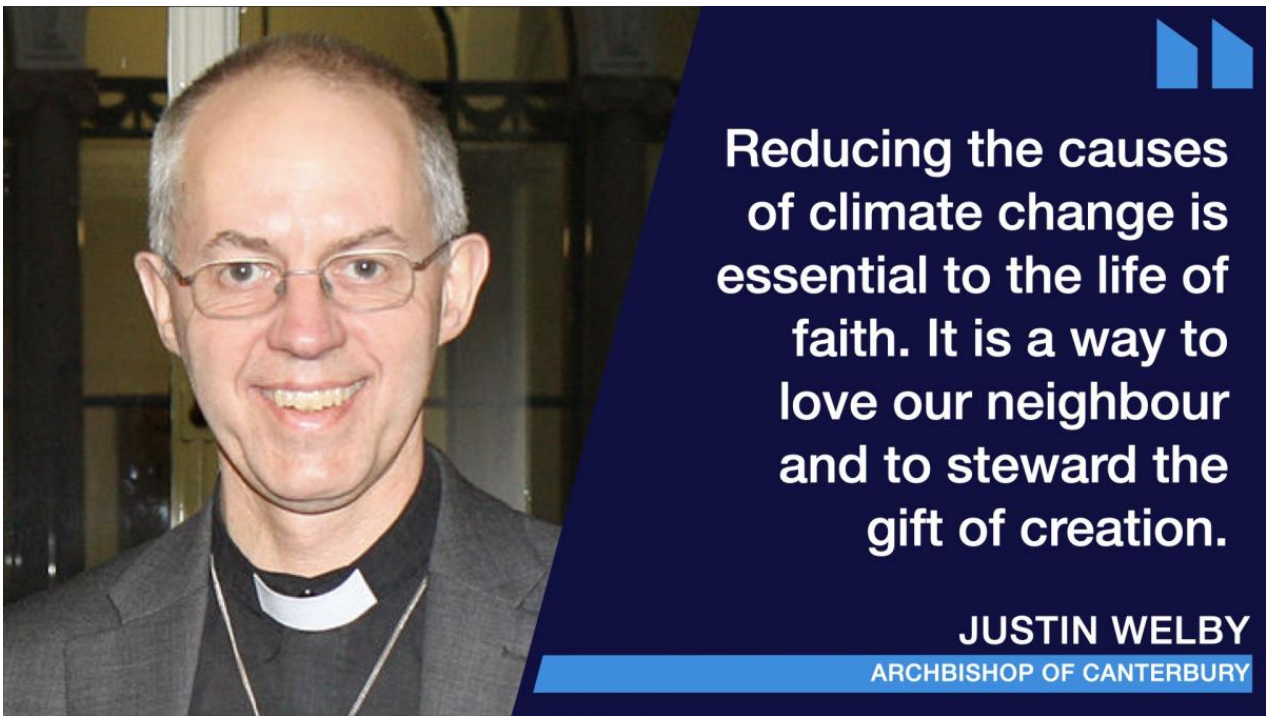
That this Synod, recognising that the global climate emergency is a crisis for God's creation, and a fundamental injustice, and following the call of the Anglican Communion in ACC Resolutions A17.05 and A17.06;

(a) call upon all parts of the Church of England, including parishes, BMOs [Bishop Mission Orders], education institutions, dioceses, cathedrals, and the NCIs [National Church Institutions], to work to achieve year-on-year reductions in emissions and urgently examine what would be required to reach net zero emissions by 2030 in order that a plan of action can be drawn up to achieve that target;

(b) request reports on progress from the Environment Working Group and the NCI's every three years beginning in 2022 and;

(c) call on each Diocesan Synod, and cathedral Chapter, to address progress toward net zero emissions every three years.

UK Column News on 20 January 2021 also highlighted Welby's dedication to saving the planet, as seen in this quotation:



So how big is the Primate of All England's commitment to saving the planet in reality? It took another church document to provide that evidence trail. The document is reproduced below:



The critical entry (highlighted for the reader by the red arrow) boasts that £10,100,000,000,000 has been amassed by the C of E and its global finance partners for the **Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI)**. Fascinated by the prospect of such an impoverished church commanding so vast a sum, we followed the evidence trail to

see just how this mind-bending amount of cash had been created by the money lenders so unbeloved of Christ. To keep things simple, the UK Column produced a number of infographics illustrating the £10.1 trillion stash and its creation. These are reproduced below.

"Bold leadership" for what ends?

Let's start with how the TPI was established.



The TPI was established in 2017 as a joint initiative between the Church of England National Investing Bodies (Church of England Pensions Board, the Church Commissioners and CBF Funds) and the Environment Agency Pension Fund.

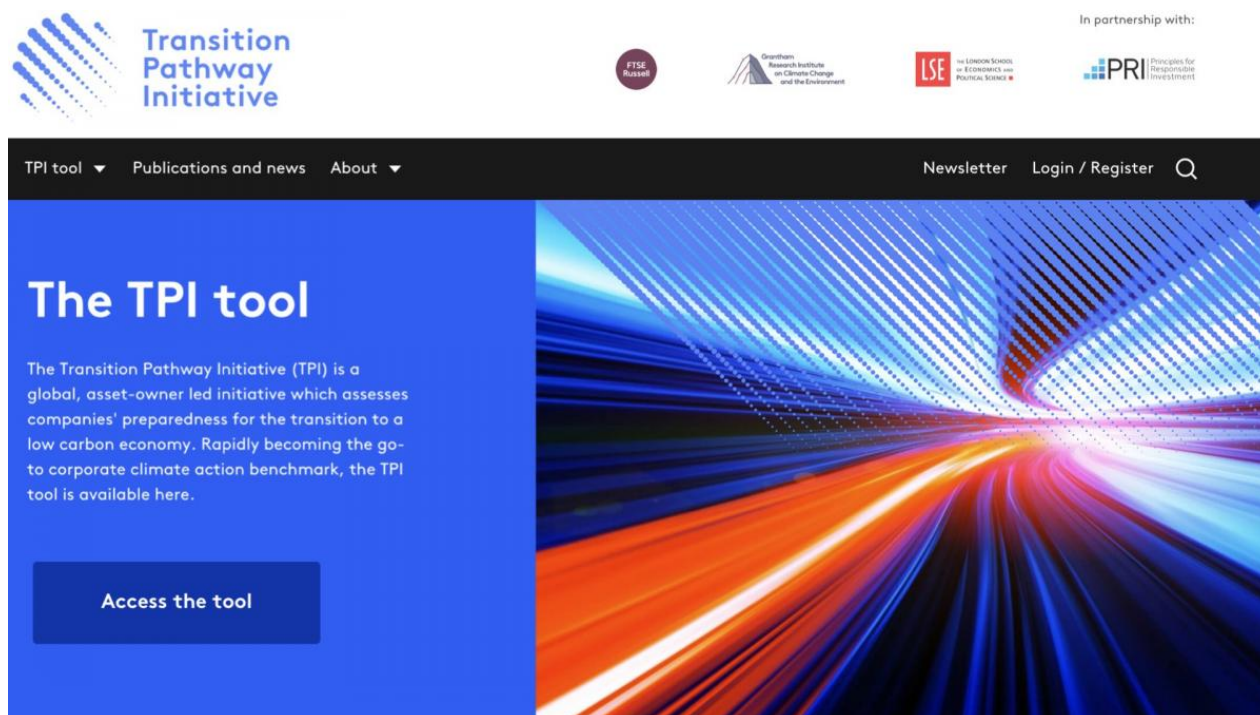
TPI is governed by the TPI Steering Group and consists of representatives from asset owners who are significant sponsors of the initiative. Additional funding is provided by selected Research Funding Partners who are not part of the Steering Group



A dedicated Project Research Team led by Professor Simon Dietz oversee the development of the assessment methodology, throughout feedback is sought from experts and industry peers.

TPI's on-going assessment work is guided by a Technical Advisory Group comprising expertise from academia, asset management and other relevant fields. The group undertakes regular reviews of the methodology and provides technical advice regarding TPI's evolution.

So if the TPI was set up by the Church of England National Investing Bodies and the Environment Agency Pension Fund, what exactly is it designed to do? The answer is found here on their website, under the heading "The TPI tool".



Since its inception in 2017, Welby has been greatly supportive of and outspoken about the TPI initiative. As just one example, in the 3 July 2018 edition of Premier Christian News, Welby reportedly called for "**bold leadership on climate change at London Stock Exchange**".

Journalist Tola Mbakwe stated that:

Most Rev Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, has highlighted the role of the Church in tackling climate change.

Archbishop Justin made bold calls regarding the issue after opening the market on Monday morning at the London Stock Exchange.

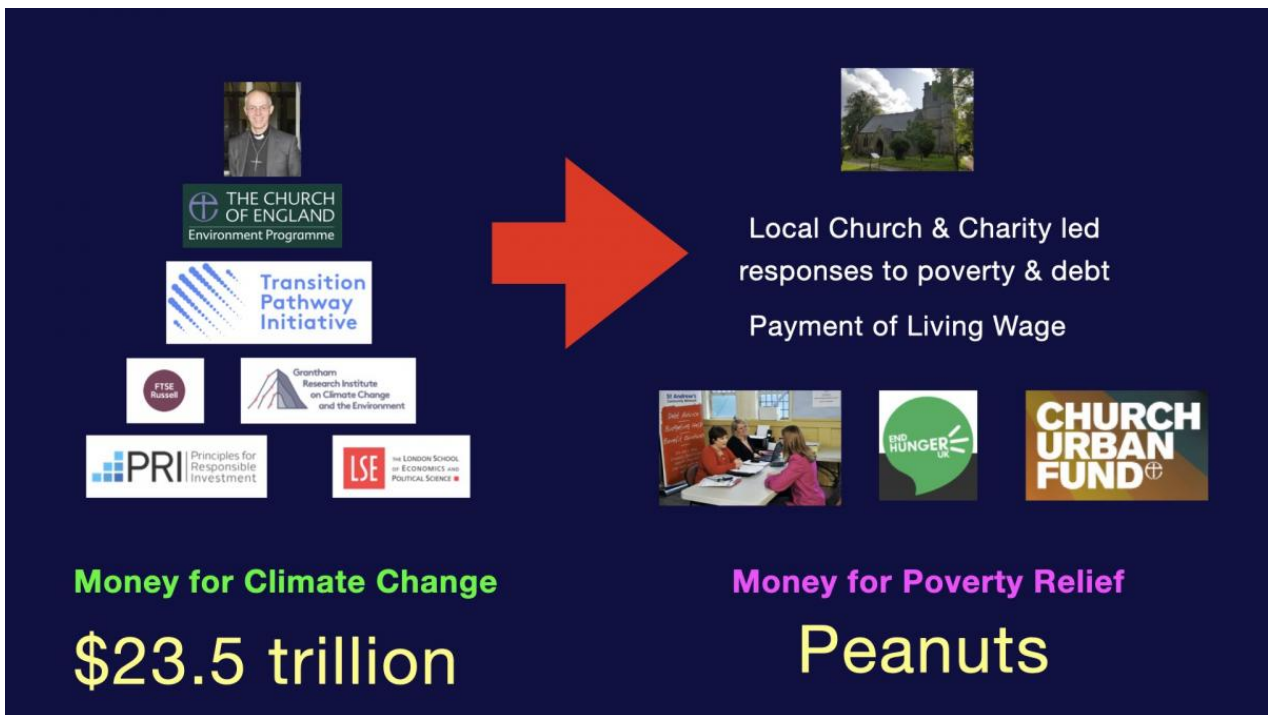
Speaking to delegates at the Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI) Summit, he said: "As investors, the Church is aware of its responsibility to make sure that we manage things in a manner that is aligned with Christian values, witness and mission."

Other public reports of his enthusiasm for tackling climate change in partnership with the international bankers, hedge funds — and, yes, the London Stock Exchange — are revealed by [a simple internet search](#).

Luckily, the UK Column was able to create an infographic highlighting Archbishop Welby atop his \$23.5 trillion banking power pyramid. As we shall see a little later, his broad smile, often seen when he is able to mix and socialise with the international banking élite, demonstrates he feels at ease in the company of the world's money lenders.



So does the story end there? Goodness, no. We nearly forgot all the little people working during their spare time to raise those pennies and pounds to help pay for the upkeep of their local parish church, for which the Church of England just can't seem to find the funds. Does that produce a somewhat unbalanced and un-Christian image in your mind? Well, it did ours, and we did our best to capture it.



As the big red arrow prompts us to ask, just how is it that the Archbishop of the Church of England can help to raise trillions for the political agenda of climate change, whilst sitting on unknown billions squirrelled away in the C of E coffers, and yet there are just peanuts for the propagation of the Gospel and the consolation of the faithful in local parishes, and even less for practical relief of the poor and hungry?

Were we unkind in mentioning the Justin Welby smile? We don't think so, because there are so many images to indicate that Welby looks very comfortable indeed in the company of the world's Mammon men. The two images below seem to demonstrate this quite nicely.



Disenchantment

We are not alone in losing faith in the current duo of Archbishops who oversee the Church of England's dioceses. Rev. Dr **Melvin Tinker** of Hull, the least churched city in the land, has recently spoken about his **decision to leave the Church of England**, taking one of his diocese's largest congregations with him. He accuses the current two archbishops, Welby and Cottrell, of being the "grave-diggers of the Church of England" (at 50:00). He points out that his own sworn allegiance to the episcopal hierarchy was, in the wording of the **Oath of Canonical Obedience**, not a blind obedience but one "in all things honest and lawful" (36:15).

An eye-opener for Dr Tinker was when the then Bishop of Chelmsford told Bible believers in his diocese that if they had objections to the notorious child sexualisation charity Mermaids being invited in to agitate at a Church of England school, they should **leave the Church of England**, in local vicar Rev. John Parker's **disputed** account. Bishop Cottrell's reward for this reported high-handedness was to be elevated to York, making him Dr Tinker's own archbishop.

Asset-Stripped Anglicanism

As seen in Bishop Cottrell's alleged bulldozing (redolent of Common Purpose founder Julia Middleton's language on **isolating and steamrolling all who will not go along**), there does seem to be a drive to sideline established local incumbents in the ministry, particularly those who enjoy the centuries-old normal manner of appointment: the practically unsackable status of being the rector of a parish or parishes. Their replacements increasingly tend to be priests-in-charge, whose tenure is at the will of the local bishop. On what sufferance are they retained from contract period to contract period? Financial performance is a growing factor in that consideration.

Let us examine the ecclesiastical twist on the City of London's old practice of cantilevering (buying out local associations and public utilities by hypothecating their own assets as liabilities against them). How are the sheep being shorn?

The key insight here is that **the greatest money power is that of the little people, as long as you can aggregate it. To do that, you have to exert a pseudo-legal right to control their assets from the centre, by raking it in before doling it back out, pretending that this constitutes accountability.**

As the base of the pyramid (mass church attendance) has dwindled in recent decades, *more* managers have been stuffed into central roles at regional and national levels, making it top-heavy and inverting the pyramid entirely. Nevertheless, no amendments have been made to the Church of England's prior financial systems, accounting conventions, contribution ratios or giving expectations.

At the same time as the move towards central control, there has been an increasing emphasis on each local congregation's (increasingly unachievable) responsibility to be **self-funding**, yet the costs for each parish merely to keep existing have been spiralling upwards due to red tape.

In such circumstances, those wishing to asset-strip the Church need only bring about a situation where **the centre controls the assets** (de-facto at least, and as much as possible at law also), but where **the congregations hold the liabilities** (their obligations to pay their contributions to central Church coffers, known as the parish share). **Once the locals' money has been through the till centrally, you have converted it into a control mechanism.** This is *not* the historic canon-law position of who owns congregations' funds; the centre was always meant to be there for administration as a service, not for collection demanded with menaces.

The next step of the ruse is to keep the parishes 'light', as accountants put it: to ensure that local congregations are not carrying sufficient reserves to hold a buffer for their unforeseen expenses in a responsible manner, while the centre at the

same time holds massive 'unusable' reserves. Where there are windfalls to a local congregation, they must be snapped up by the centre at once and by default. The parish had been *behind on contributing its parish share*, you understand. (In other words, a dividend-strip.)

Now, pretend a claim to all monies of local congregations that are *not* ringfenced by a too-obvious operation of trust law, such as where funds bear a local and specific name such as 'Friends Of St Eustace's Parish Church' or 'Blankborough Congregation Fund'. (To ensure that English trust law *does* apply, by choosing such names and appropriate registration, is something that requires canny local planning and the harnessing of professional expertise within the congregation— a trait which of course the centre and its local enablers does its best to discourage and belittle, as also seen with the increasingly strident refusal of bishops to license lay readers to take services where clergy are in short supply.)

Don't forget to **register each diocesan apparatus as a charity in its own right** as a cutout so that the top brass at the centre, and their humble office servants in each cathedral city, have a secure financial basis quite untroubled by shocks to parish coffers. Write the rules for diocesan staff along the lines of those that NHS trusts have imposed, such that these staff are only there to advise the *clergy*, with the result that aggrieved laity are not represented or pointed to the remedies they are entitled to.

Voilà; these 'charities' or 'trusts' of dioceses have become private clubs, yet still wielding venerable public clout, as they still hold forth that they are the accountable and humble body of yore, formed to serve every local parish in the diocese.

Now, you need to have one key crony or coterie of cronies in each local congregation, preferably disgruntled types keen to be recognised as bigwigs. Promise them a comfortable existence and to turn a blind eye to their being out of their depth, in return for their undertaking to supply an inexorably (and unsustainably) increasing revenue stream up to the centre.

Now start prevailing upon all congregations to up their quotas (being careful about your **language**). Have central, regional and local Third Sector / Big Society chums, and — if you can wangle it — iffy contractors, on hand to milk it.

Congregations now cannot maintain their independent mode of existence or ethos. They can forget being an uncompromising evangelical witness or a comforting High Church presence or a dynamic Social Gospel team to the down-and-outs, or whatever else they used to be in their town or district; they are now a franchise of Canterbury™ and York™.

Of course, you might find yourself grumbled at if you pull off this kind of stunt. If so, claim impunity on the grounds that the Church is a caring, social profession. Above all, **fudge the closing-to-opening balances** from one year to the next; no-one will spot it. **Don't publish adjusted accounts.** The Charity Commission for England and Wales will let you get away with it, as they are still operating the loophole they were supposed to close years ago whereby the C of E gets to audit its own accounts for "lack of staff" at the Charity Commission.

Congratulations! You have, without changing anything on paper, removed the hiring-and-firing power from the congregation; the priest installed from now on depends on the central episcopal appointing structure for pay and perks.

Accountability is thrown out of the window; one can still query a parochial spending decision (such as the misallocation of funds earmarked for clearly-stated other purposes), but one no longer has a right to **timely information** on committee deliberations and is presented with a *fait accompli* when minutes and accounts come out.

Are you seeing what this allows you to do? To **take local funds and return them for local capital projects, on your terms.** Mrs Miggins might have left her estate to repair the steeple, but if she and the parish councillors weren't too cute about salting her bequest away in a hands-off fund, the proceeds are going to find their way to the cathedral and back before some of the money *might* be graciously "released" or "disbursed" for repairs.

Whereas a national association of thriving local assemblies (such as the Church of England always was historically) requires an unburdensome level of fee-paying to a federated staff of managers, this new model **charges more for the same**, and the manager is now supplied from above by the centre. (Compare this with public sector mumbo-jumbo training: only the monopoly-holder's magic words make a manager, and don't you go imagining you could get one of your own capable old hands locally to oversee anything.)

Congregations are denuded: the capital asset (the building) is no longer theirs, but **the maintenance liability is theirs.** Save the Steeple!

Conclusion

There are many questions to be asked of both Justin Welby and the Church of England, in respect of the real financial wealth of the C of E, its continued claims of poverty and its apparent inability to maintain the church estate. Clearly there are even more questions to be asked of Justin Welby himself, with respect to his clear

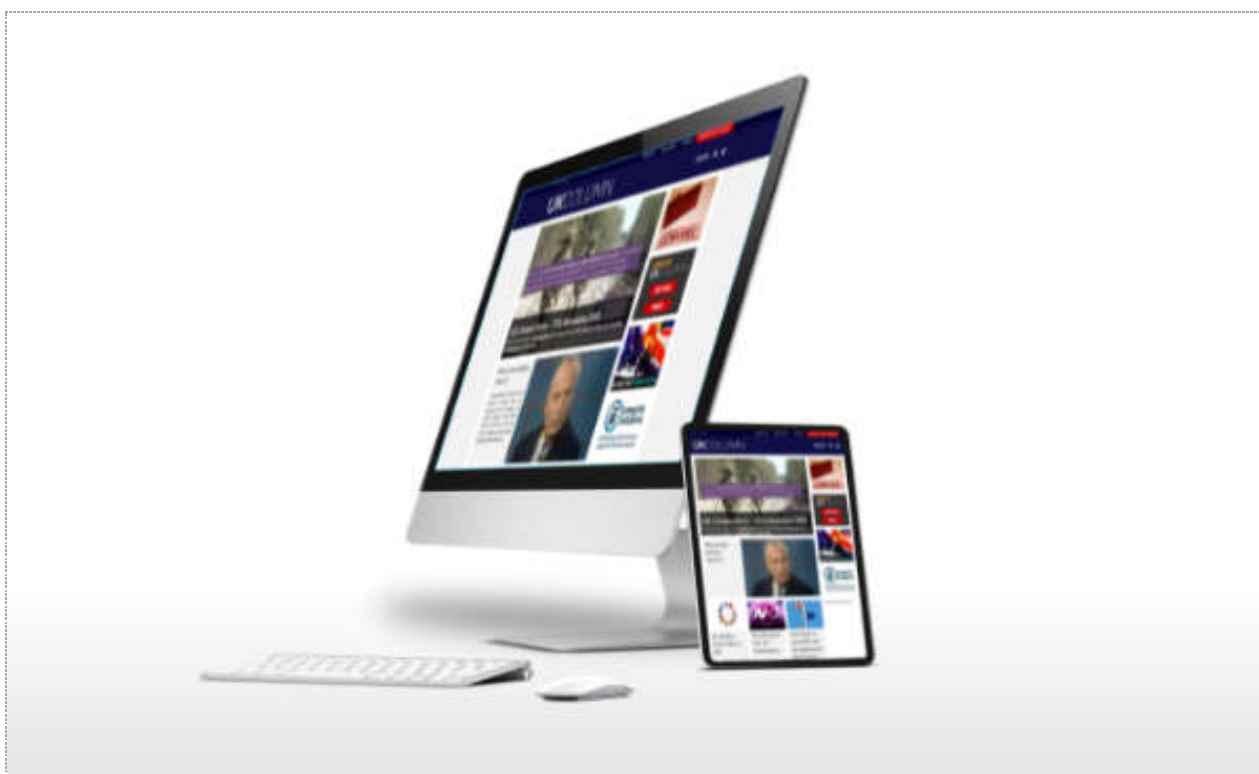
enthusiasm for joining the world's money lenders in their quest to 'save the environment and the planet.' Have these bankers really changed their spots from vast greedy personal 'wealth creation' to helping the common man in a fully Christian sense? Few would think so.

That his money table efforts can raise some £17.1 trillion pounds is nothing short of astonishing. That he can do this whilst people go hungry and live on the streets in his C of E Parishes is perhaps more astonishing. Meanwhile, his churches decay and disappear for want of, in comparison, pitiful amounts of money.

Such being the priorities of the Church of England's hierarchy now, it is little wonder that the version of the Lord's Prayer now used in its own liturgy and found in the Bible translations most often placed in its pews no longer has "And forgive us our debts" (despite that being the evident **meaning** of Greek **ὀφειλήματα** at **Matthew 6:12** and used as far back as **Wycliffe's** fourteenth-century English Bible).

Jesus Christ delivered a stark and simple message in the **overturning** of the tables of the money lenders. Just how can Archbishop of Canterbury Welby feast at their table, awash in their financial spoils, whilst calling us all to "save the planet"? Is not worship of the **planet-god Gaia** really worship of the **beast**?

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