

Rector's Letter for September

Great Gonerby Rectory

Dear Friends,

Riots – I Blame the Pensioners !

Not directly of course! Each rioter bears personal responsibility for what they did, and pensioners are generally appalled at what happened.

But the Bishop of Manchester wrote in one of the national papers that it was the decline of morality which was responsible for the UK riots, and not government cuts. He said the real reason was the "relentless erosion of Christian values", which have resulted in a moral deficit in private and public life that has spawned acquisitiveness and dishonesty -- something which is evident among all levels of our society. For once I would agree with a Bishop -- so the question becomes - when did this erosion of Christian values begin?

I think it began sometime towards the end of the Victorian age and the beginning of the 20th century. Though it seems that it certainly greatly accelerated about 70 years ago -- in the 1940s and 50s -- i.e. when today's pensioners were parents.

This was the generation that was massively responsible for abandoning God in our country. Particularly the men. How many men in their 70s do you see in our churches? When I speak to them, I find that the men of that generation mostly want nothing to do with God.

As that generation had children, so they largely failed to lead them into any kind of faith, and this was passed on to their children's children.

Now when a generation abandons God -- His authority and His rules, ethics and morality, everything does not immediately fall apart. An ethos of Christian morality will continue for a while. But because it has no faith system underpinning it, after 50 years this ethos will start to wear thin and breakdown. The Christian "capital" will have been spent. This is what we have been seeing in our society for the last 20 years and what the Bishop refers to the beginning of this article.

As our country begins a period of self examination, it should not be difficult for us to realise that we need to return to the faith which underpinned our moral decency.

*"Those who sow the wind
will reap the whirlwind"*
- The Old Testament book of Hosea 8:7

God Bless,

Revd. Peter