

# Tags: Disestablishment

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## Ep 59: The advancement of religion

Posted: Tue, 19th Oct 2021

Should organisations be entitled to tax breaks and other privileges solely on the basis that they 'advance religion'?

Under the Charities Act 2011, any organisation can register as a charity if one of its purposes – or even its only purpose – is '[the advancement of religion](#)'. But should this be enough to entitle an organisation to public funding, along with the reputational boost that comes from being a charity? What counts as a 'religion' anyway, and why does it exclude non-religious worldviews such as humanism? And what happens if the ideology espoused by that religion conflicts with widely shared values, or the law?

In this episode, [Emma Park](#) discusses these questions with [Megan Manson](#), Head of Policy and Research at the National Secular Society, and co-author of the 2019 report, [For the public benefit? The case for removing 'the advancement of religion' as a charitable purpose](#).

Megan also gives an update on charities recently brought to light by the NSS whose only or main charitable purpose is the advancement of religion. Some of these have openly advocated unpalatable views, from [extremism and jihad](#) to [misogyny](#) to [gay conversion therapy](#).

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## Ep 53: Religion and LGBT rights: fifty years of change

Posted: Tue, 6th Jul 2021

The history of LGBT rights in the UK has involved persistent struggles against prejudice, entrenched views – and organised religion.

In this episode, [Emma Park](#) speaks to two leading campaigners for LGBT equality and social acceptance in Britain. Her first guest, Peter Tatchell, has been campaigning on these issues since 1967. Since 2011, he has directed the [Peter Tatchell Foundation](#), which campaigns for human

rights around the world. His story has been told in the documentary *Hating Peter Tatchell*, released this year on Netflix. Emma's second guest, [Terry Sanderson](#), started campaigning for gay rights in 1969. Terry joined the National Secular Society in the 1990s and was its president from 2006 to 2017.

The two speakers talk to Emma Park about their long experience of fighting for LGBT rights from the late 1960s to today. Each of them shares personal memories of what it was like to be gay in those years, and some of the highlights of their campaigning. They also describe the resistance they encountered from religious organisations every step of the way. Finally, Peter discusses the ways in which such organisations continue to oppose LGBT equality today, and Terry considers how far it is possible to be both gay and religious.

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## Notes

- [Peter Tatchell's life on film: 'So far I've been violently assaulted 300 times'](#)
- [The gay community should recognise and oppose its chief oppressor – Terry Sanderson](#)
- [Most faith schools distorting sex education, NSS study finds](#)

## Ep 50: The Church of England's influence over education

Posted: Tue, 25th May 2021

What does it mean for a school to be 'C of E'? And how far does the Church of England's influence extend over state-funded education?

The NSS has recently published two reports dealing with the Church of England's influence over schools. The first, 'Religiosity inspections: The case against faith-based inspections of faith schools', examined the ways in which the Church of England uses such inspections to impose its own agenda on the schools within its remit. In 'Understanding Christianity and the study of religion and worldviews: How the Church of England has gained control of Religious Education', former RE teacher Chris Selway examined the structure of RE in England and Wales.

In this podcast, Emma Park speaks to Chris Selway along with Matthew Hill, a former headteacher who contributed to the 'Religiosity inspections' report. Both speakers draw from their own experience of teaching to explore the ways in which some schools are being pressured to encourage proselytising, and the effects which this can have on students as well as teachers. The speakers argue that the C of E must be held to account, and that the way RE is taught needs fundamental reform.

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## Notes

- [Understanding Christianity and the study of religion and worldviews: How the C of E has gained control of religious education](#)
- [Religiosity inspections: the case against faith-based reviews of state schools](#)
- [Faith groups have no business inspecting schools – Stephen Evans](#)

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## **Ep 38: Disestablishing the Church of England**

Posted: Thu, 12th Nov 2020

In this episode, Emma Park is joined by the National Secular Society's Stephen Evans to discuss the 2020 Bradlaugh Lecture and the case for disestablishing the Church of England.

The NSS's Bradlaugh Lecture provides an opportunity for a distinguished speaker to explore a secularist issue in detail. This year's lecture was on the topic of disestablishing the Church of England. It was given by Geoffrey Robertson QC, a human rights barrister and head of Doughty Street Chambers.

Accompanied by clips from the lecture, Emma and Stephen discuss the key issues raised. These include the importance of disestablishment to the NSS from the time of its founder, Charles Bradlaugh; the question of whether the Church of England's spiritual role and independence are compromised by its involvement in politics; and whether its role as the established church has had an impact on the C of E's historic cover-up of child abuse within its ranks.

Following Robertson's lead, Stephen and Emma also consider parallels between Henry VIII and Boris Johnson, the possibility that the C of E might simply disestablish itself, and why speaking about the coronation of Charles III in the wrong way might be an act of treason.

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### **Notes**

- [Bradlaugh Lecture 2020 | The Ultimate Blasphemy: Disestablishing the Church of England](#)
- [Charles Bradlaugh](#)

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## **Ep 33: Kaja Bryx, Catholic nationalism in Poland**

Posted: Thu, 3rd Sep 2020

In this episode Emma Park speaks to Kaja Bryx, president of the Polish Rationalist Association, about the influence of the Catholic Church and the religious right in Poland.

Last year, the traditionalist Law and Justice party (PiS) was elected to its second term as the leading party in the right-wing coalition government. In July 2020, Andrzej Duda, a former member of PiS, was elected to his second term as president.

Kaja and Emma discuss the impact that party and president have had upon legislation, education and public life in Poland.

They consider the privileges already granted to the Catholic Church in its post-Communist agreement with Poland, and whether these are likely to be reinforced under the current administration. They look at the perilous state of LGBT-inclusive education in schools, the current restrictions on women's reproductive rights, and the different views held about them in Poland. They also discuss what the Polish Rationalist Association has been doing to counter the influence of Catholic organisations.

Emma also joined by Aleksandra Myslek, an NSS council member, to discuss the NSS's latest submissions to the UN on Poland and the impact of the Catholic Church on children's education. Aleks, who is a professional pianist, has also kindly provided the music for this episode.

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## Notes

- [Modern Day Crusaders in Europe: Report by the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights](#)
- [Family, faith, flag: The religious right and the battle for Poland's soul – \*The Guardian\*](#)
- [Polish Rationalist Association](#)

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## [Ep 31: Graham Smith \(not that type of republican\)](#)

Posted: Thu, 30th Jul 2020

If you're a secularist, should you also be a republican? How have the two movements been historically intertwined – and how close are the ties between the monarchy and the Church of England today? Why does it matter to ordinary British citizens if our political and religious establishment is still Anglican and monarchical? And will anything change under Charles III?

In this episode, Emma Park discusses these questions and more with [Graham Smith](#). Graham is CEO of Republic, a membership-based pressure group that campaigns to abolish the monarchy. The interview is followed with a comment from the National Secular Society's Alastair Lichten.

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## Notes

- [NSS research finds just a third of the public supports royal ties with the Church of England](#)
- [The monarch's role as head of the Church of England is unsustainable](#)
- [Will Anglicanism reign supreme at the next coronation?](#)
- [Republic | campaigning for a democratic alternative to the monarchy](#)
- [Find out more about the National Secular Society's republican history](#)
- [The Impeachment of The House of Brunswick](#), NSS founder Charles Bradlaugh's polemic against the hereditary royal family.

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