

*Salt and Light Papers provide important information and analysis to help Christians and Churches to engage with 21<sup>st</sup> century social issues*

RA7

---

## HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO SOCIETY

---

Every year, more and more issues arise in which public policy is in conflict with biblical truth. Christians are always being encouraged to make their voice heard, but may at times not be clear how best to do this. Here are some suggestions, ideas and contact details.

### 1. The Prime Minister

The Prime Minister may be contacted on any matter of public policy:

The Rt Hon David Cameron MP  
The Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1A 2AA

The Prime Minister can be faxed on 020 7925 0918.

### 2. Your local Member of Parliament

Your local MP is entitled to speak and to vote in debates on new legislation. Contact details for your local MP are available on [www.faxyourmp.com](http://www.faxyourmp.com). Your MP can usually be contacted by email as follows: [surnameinitial@parliament.uk](mailto:surnameinitial@parliament.uk) (e.g. James Smith, MP, would be [smithj@parliament.uk](mailto:smithj@parliament.uk))

Letters may be sent to MPs at:

House of Commons  
LONDON  
SW1A 0AA

MPs do listen to constituents who feel strongly enough to write to them about an issue. In addition, you can be sure that on some issues which Christians are concerned about, MPs will be

receiving letters from people who disagree with the Christian viewpoint. No matter how strongly Christians may feel about something, if we are silent this can easily be construed as consent or apathy.

Most MPs have a regular 'surgery' in their constituencies at which constituents can meet them to discuss a particular concern. Typically these will be every fortnight on a Friday between about 5.00pm and 7.00pm, and appointments are for 15 minutes. To obtain an appointment, write to the MP requesting one and his or her secretary will contact you to make a firm arrangement. This gives an opportunity not only to make the contact more personal, but to explain more fully how crucial biblical principles are to your way of life and how you would be affected by a proposed law which expected you to act in a way which conflicted with it.

### **3. Members of the House of Lords**

As Peers do not have local constituencies, anyone can contact any of them on matters which the House will be debating and voting on. A full list of Peers can be found at:

[http://www.parliament.uk/directories/house\\_of\\_lords\\_information\\_office/alphabetical\\_list\\_of\\_members.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/directories/house_of_lords_information_office/alphabetical_list_of_members.cfm)

Or on the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship web site at: [www.lawcf.org/lawreform](http://www.lawcf.org/lawreform)

Letters to Peers should be addressed to them at:

House of Lords  
LONDON  
SW1A 0AA

### **4. Letter-writing tips**

When writing to MPs or Peers, letters don't have to be long and detailed, although they can be if you wish. The most important element is that you clearly set out your position, giving one or two reasons for your view. Letters should always be courteous and moderate in tone. A good tip is to pick one or two points from a briefing paper you may have obtained from the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship or The Christian Institute and to put them into your letter in your own words. Personal experiences can also be included where this is appropriate, and any specific involvement or expertise you may have which is relevant to the issue about which you are writing.

### **5. Responding to particular Consultation papers**

All government departments carry out public Consultations on issues likely to be the subject of future legislation.

If you key *government consultations* into an internet search box, you will be given the opportunity to click on the Cabinet Office's Consultations web site which lists all government departments which carry out Consultations. Clicking on the title of each department will bring up a list of the titles of current Consultations being run by that department, and these can each be opened for fuller details, and the opportunity to view and download the Consultation documents.

Details of how to respond to a particular Consultation are always given in each Consultation paper. Some invite written submissions, while others are questionnaire based. Still others are simple box-ticking exercises.

## **6. Press and Media**

Everyone has the opportunity to write to the national press or to their local newspaper. Perhaps this will be triggered by a report or article you have seen in a previous issue of the paper, or by a reader's letter to which you would like to respond.

It is better to write as briefly as possible, simply expressing the view you want to present. Refer back to the article or letter to which you are responding, clearly expressing your support or disagreement, and giving a different perspective or a fresh point for consideration. Always include your full contact details with your letter as these will be needed by the publication to establish your genuineness.

Isabel Bathurst

*The above was published in The Bulletin [March 2007]*

**Salt and Light Papers** is a series of occasional papers on contemporary issues of social concern. It is published online by the Affinity Social Issues Team. Its purpose is to help Christians to think through questions of relevance to our place in the world around us. The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily endorsed by the Affinity Social Issues Team.

---

The Old Bank House, 17 Malpas Road, Newport, South Wales. NP20 5PA  
Telephone: 01633 893925  
Email: [office@affinity.org.uk](mailto:office@affinity.org.uk)  
Website: [www.affinity.org.uk](http://www.affinity.org.uk)

**affinity**  
gospel churches in partnership