

Appointing Christian Leaders

1. I'm writing this some months before the appointment of the next Archbishop of Canterbury. I do not mentally have a 'candidate', nor have I read-up about them. I find the current process **disturbing**.
2. It is April 2002. Were a newspaper now to carry the banner headline – ARCHBISHOP HAS BEEN DECIDED, it would be the ecclesiastical scoop of the year. People would know it was a lie, yet – hang on a minute! – it would in fact be the **TRUTH!**
3. In our democratic society it is easy to forget that the Christian family, the Church, is **not a democracy**, whose leaders (at any level) are ours to appoint.
4. To put it into focus: the Church belongs to God, it is **he who appoints, not us**. The choice of the Archbishop (like that of every Christian 'position' however lowly) has already been made.
5. Who is the right person for any appointment in God's Church? The answer is always the same – and it is not really surprising: "**God knows!**"
6. Our business, in this as in so many other Christian matters, is not to decide *for* God, but to listen *to* him and discern his decision. There is a world of difference whether we allow God to tell us, or whether we try to dictate to him!
7. What we need are not more 'candidates' or more information – but more Christian listeners who are spiritually-tuned to God and to his plans and his purposes, and who can speak his mind to us.

Come to think of it, that's not a bad job description...!