

The Church has a duty to challenge popular culture but also to listen and be challenged by it, the Bishop of Leeds Nick Baines, has said.

He was speaking as a survey in *The Times* newspaper highlighted views among some clergy on a range of questions.

The findings were based on replies by clergy who responded to a list of email questions earlier this summer.

Bishop Nick said it highlighted the challenge the Church has faced in every generation in seeking both to listen to public opinion but also being a "prophetic" voice.

"The Church is the Church, and, as such, not a club, he said.

"It has a distinct vocation that does not include seeking popularity.

"As God's Church, it is made up of people who love God, his world and its people. Worship, love and justice lie at the heart of its vocation.

"This means that the Church – in every generation – has to live with the tension of being prophetic (challenging the way the world is) whilst listening to the challenge the world brings to it.

"'Repentance' means being open to changing our mind in order that society should encounter both love and justice. And this means sometimes going against the flow of popular culture, however uncomfortable that might be.

"What this survey seems to show is that clergy aren't detached in an ivory tower, but really wrestling – thoughtfully and prayerfully - with the kinds of questions our society is also addressing. This is how it has always been and should be.

"Evidently, the Church hasn't always got it right, but cannot escape the demands of its calling to be faithful to God in loving his world."

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