

GENERAL SYNOD
ELECTIONS TO THE HOUSE OF LAITY 2010

ELECTION ADDRESS by
DAVID KEMP

Elections to the General Synod are always important, but even more so this year when the Church of England faces crucial decisions which will affect its mission for years to come. I believe I have something to contribute to the Synod and I am asking for your vote.



Who am I?

I was born into a clergy household in Croydon (then part of Canterbury Diocese) just after the war and I've been "in the church" all my life. Starting in Sunday School, progressing through being a choirboy and server, on to youth camps, being a PCC member, serving as Secretary, Treasurer and Churchwarden, though not at the same time!

Then into the Deanery Synod and Diocesan Synod, serving as Board of Finance Chairman for a short time before becoming Diocesan Secretary in 1990. There followed a fascinating 17 years before I retired in 2007.

I have worshipped in small country parishes and large urban churches, and for the last 16 years my wife, Lynda, and I have been members of the church family at Seasalter, in the Whitstable Team Ministry.

In my life outside the Church, before becoming Diocesan Secretary I worked in banks and building societies. In my spare time I enjoy sport, particularly golf, I act

on the amateur stage, I read and enjoy history. We have two grown-up children and one gorgeous granddaughter.

SUMMARY FOR THE BUSY VOTER

Born into an *Anglo-Catholic* family - now worship in an open *Evangelical* church - by temperament a questioning *Liberal*.

Wide experience of the way the Church works administratively and politically

Fundamentally optimistic about the Church of England

Strongly in favour of women bishops - without them the Church loses credibility in today's world

Inclusive on questions of sexuality while recognising the difficulties caused in other parts of the Anglican Communion

But the most important issues are the mobilization of the laity and the continuing development of mission which connects with England in the 21st Century

My view of the Church of England

The idea that the Church of England is a three-legged stool, resting on Scripture, Tradition and Reason, was first proposed by Richard Hooker, one of the foundational writers on the Church as well as Vicar of Bishopsbourne, near Canterbury, in the 1500's.

By its very nature the C of E is a coalition of those who place different values on each of the three elements but I believe that the C of E is at its best when all three legs of the stool are given equal respect - when one becomes too dominant at the expense of the other two, there is usually trouble.

I am optimistic about the future of the C of E. It has shown an ability to cope with the strains and stresses of its communal life over centuries and, in the last 20 years, has rediscovered the importance of mission in its widest sense.

The big issues

I believe strongly that the Church of England should have women as bishops. Jesus valued women so much that He broke the news of the Resurrection first to Mary. It seems illogical to me that a church which owes its (political) existence to a woman, Queen Elizabeth I, banging male heads together should resist this particular ministry of women. A church which bars women from the "top" jobs damages its credibility in today's world. But, as always in the Body of Christ, everyone must care for those with whom they disagree.

On questions of sexuality I am inclusive. Over recent years science has given us much greater insight into, and understanding of, sexual orientation than that possessed by people in biblical times. But I am anxious about the effect which decisions made by the Church in the developed world have on our fellow-Christians in other countries. Society as a whole seems uncertain about some issues of sexuality and I can see no harm in the Church moving slowly and carefully on the subject.

But aside from the big political issues I believe that the Church needs to keep its focus on two things - the mobilization of the laity and the development of mission.

In too many places the Church still seems to be run by the clergy with the assistance of the laity. But surely the Church, of all institutions, should be a place where all gifts are valued equally and where everyone is encouraged to use their gifts to the glory of God. I will support any initiatives, local or national, which encourage and resource the laity to live out their Christian potential.

I once heard a preacher say that he invited people into the church and immediately turned them round to face outwards. There is a great temptation to spend too much time on our internal discussions when we should be concentrating on telling God's story by word and deed. We must put our scarce resources into places where growth is possible and we must continue to be imaginative in developing Fresh Expressions.

So finally ...

- Please vote - even if not for me. Whoever is elected needs to know they have the Diocese with them.
- If you think I could be a good representative for the Diocese, please vote for me.
- If you feel able to, please give me your first preference vote.

Thank you.