

GENERAL SYNOD ELECTIONS TO THE HOUSE OF LAITY 2015

ELECTION ADDRESS by DAVID KEMP

Elections to the General Synod are always important, even when there aren't big headline issues like women bishops to be decided. I have enjoyed my first five-year term on General Synod as a representative of the Canterbury laity. I believe I have something more 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 21 years my wife, Lynda, and I have been members of the church family at Seasalter, part of the Whitstable Team Ministry.

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 two gorgeous grandchildren.

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
- 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

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 value - when one becomes too dominant, 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 25 years, has rediscovered the importance of mission in its widest sense.

The big issues

I am delighted that the Church now has women as bishops. It took some time and a good deal of give and take but the last Synod got there in the end.

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. Just as society as a whole is uncertain about some issues of sexuality I see no harm in the Church moving slowly and carefully on the subject so that there is a chance of moving together.

As the Chair of the Canterbury Diocesan Safeguarding Board I have spoken in the various debates on the subject in the last Synod. This is a vital area of work for the church, primarily so that children and vulnerable adults are protected but also because when things go wrong the church's reputation is damaged and the gospel's credibility is reduced. There is still work to do.

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 those gifts to the glory of God. I will support any initiatives, local or national, which free up the laity to live out their Christian potential.

A preacher once said that he invites people into the church and immediately turns 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 ways of being church which are relevant to Britain today.

Thank you.

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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.