



Bill Seddon

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Proposed by:
David Cansdale
Diocesan Synod and Bishop's Council

Seconded by:
Helen Turner
Lay Chair, Bishop's Stortford Deanery
Synod

Personal:
63 years old, married to Rosie for 39
years with three adult children and one
grandson;

Chief Executive of the Central Finance
Board of the Methodist Church;

General Synod House of Laity
2010-2015, St Albans Diocese

What can I offer as your General Synod representative?

- as a local parish member

As a life-long Anglican I have always been a committed member of my parish church, which for over twenty years has meant worshipping with my family at St Andrew's, Chorleywood. I have served in many capacities both at St Andrew's and elsewhere, including as church warden and PCC lay vice-chair. However, my great passion has been for children's ministry. Many years of seeking innovative ways of teaching Christian truths has deepened my own faith and stopped it from becoming stale.

- as a senior church executive

For the past thirty years I have been Chief Executive of the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church (CFB). This involves responsibility for managing over £1.3 billion on behalf of pension and charitable trusts and has many similarities with the Church of England's National Investment Bodies. As a senior executive in the Methodist Church I have considerable experience in the world of church finances at denominational level, working not only with the Church of England but also many other denominations around the world. This has exposed me to a variety of approaches in tackling the challenges that are common to so many churches.

- as an experienced practitioner on ethical issues

It is my responsibility to ensure that the CFB's investments meet the ethical policy of the Methodist Church. This involves me in areas of considerable controversy, not least in relation to climate change. I work closely with the Church of England, sitting on the Ethical Investment Advisory Group as the CFB Observer. I am also Chair of the Church Investors Group, whose members control assets of over £15bn. Although the return on the Church's investments is important we recognise that it must not be earned in a way that is at variance with the Gospel message. If re-elected my experience in tackling controversial ethical issues and explaining them to others will be at the disposal of General Synod.

Bringing together an understanding of the big picture without losing sight of local implications allows me, I believe, to make informed contributions to the work of General Synod.

Serving on General Synod

- by informing others

I believe that one of a member's key responsibilities is to try and make General Synod come alive to the local church as we pass on information about the decisions taken and the issues considered. I have done this by circulating my personal reflections on each Group of Sessions (<http://billseddon.org.uk>) to my 'link' Deanery Synods, and encouraging them to pass these on to their own PCCs. If re-elected I am committed to continue writing these reports. It is also important to find opportunities to explain how General Synod works. This can be done through regular presentations to your 'link' Deanery Synods, but also by meeting with PCCs and other groups such as local Readers. Whenever possible I am happy to respond favourably to such invitations.

Serving on General Synod

- by asking questions

As a member of General Synod I believe one of my duties is to tackle issues that others within the Diocese bring to my attention as well as my own concerns. For example, I asked a question in response to allegations made about the financial health of the Church's pension scheme, a subject where I have professional knowledge. As a result a member of one of my 'link' Deaneries asked me to raise her concerns about ill health provision for clergy early in their ministries. Consequently, I put a question to the Pension's Board and followed it up with a letter to the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee. It is a complicated issue with no easy answers, but has already resulted in a promise to improve the information provided for clergy on the subject. If re-elected I am committed to help your voices be heard within the Church.

Serving on General Synod

- by speaking out

As a member of General Synod it is important to be willing and able to speak out. However, care needs to be taken to do so only if it is something on which you have some knowledge or experience. My maiden speech was to support the Church in committing to become a *Living Wage* employer and I have contributed to debates on Climate Change and the Church's investment policy. These are all issues on which I have considerable experience through my work for the Methodist Church. Of course even when prepared one is not always called. My speeches whether delivered or not are all on my website. If re-elected I am committed to speak out where I have knowledge and experience.

What are my views on the key issues facing the Church of England?

- Reform and Renewal.

In this as in every generation, the task of the Church is to proclaim the gospel. Never has it been a more urgent priority with church attendances declining, the average age of congregations rising and around 40% of our clergy retiring over the next decade. I therefore welcomed the launch of a series of initiatives reimagining ministry to promote numerical and spiritual growth as well as contributing to the common good. These will take many forms, but I am particularly excited by the commitment of the Church Commissioners to provide additional finance for mission and growth with a bias towards the poorest communities. The *Reform and Renewal* programmes will be key aspects of General Synod's work over the next five years. If elected I will do all I can to support them and ensure that resources are deployed effectively to disciple our members and encourage dynamic and innovative evangelism.

What are my views on the key issues facing the Church of England?

- human sexuality.

Human sexuality is likely to be a significant and possibly divisive aspect of the work of the General Synod. The 'shared conversations' process will be brought to a conclusion at the July 2016 Group of Sessions, with two days have been set aside for members to participate. It is most unlikely that there will be a consensus, but it provides the opportunity for what is being called 'good disagreement'. I understand this to mean that ultimate truth is God's alone and we need to act in the knowledge that our strongly held convictions may be wrong. Somehow we need to find a way through God's grace to live and worship together despite the knowledge that we have deeply felt differences of opinion with others within the Church. If elected I will enter these conversations with an open mind, a wish to be directed by sound biblical scholarship, but a determination not to let our differences drive us apart.

And Finally

Above all, I offer my willingness to serve. Part of this involves listening to different points of view and representing them fairly when the opportunity arises so if I am re-elected do contact me. Please consider giving me your first preference vote.