

Lucas Durant

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Personal Statement

It is my desire to see the Church of England flourish as it 'contends for the faith once delivered to the saints' in a rapidly changing society.

Much is made of the idea that younger generations no longer find the Church 'credible'. As a 'Millennial', I am convinced that my generation longs for bold authenticity above bland uniformity. We must remain true to our identity and mission, rooted in Scripture, if we are to be attractive; any departures from this foundation for the sake of 'getting with the program' of the culture is bound to seem pandering and inauthentic. We have a glorious inheritance in the Church of England, and I wish to help it navigate the current cultural conundrums in a way that takes contemporary questions seriously, while retaining orthodox belief and practice.

I am a philosopher by training, Anglican by choice and evangelical by conviction. My age, my experience of the Anglican tradition across three countries (USA, Belgium & UK), and my background in philosophy will enable me to make a unique and thoughtful contribution to General Synod.

Specific Issues

MISSION

The mission of the Church is to proclaim that Jesus is Lord and to call all people to the repentance and faith that His Lordship demands. The local congregation is the primary locus of this mission. I believe, therefore, that all ecclesiological structures and policies should enable and release local clergy for this central mission.

REFORM & RENEWAL

As the 'Reform and Renewal' agenda is currently at centre stage in General Synod, it seems appropriate that I should share my (brief) responses to the various reports.

The 'Resourcing the Future' report's emphasis on the need for a more strategic and transparent use of national funds is long overdue. We cannot afford to subsidise decline, mission must come first.

The 'Developing Discipleship' report rightly highlights the need for more attention to what comes after baptism and/or confirmation in the life of the Christian. A definition of discipleship which crossed the lines of tradition could be a great boon to the church. I believe failure to elucidate what real discipleship looks like is a contributing factor to many individuals being lost at transitional moments (e.g. the transition from child to young adult, etc.).

The 'Encouraging Vocations' report finally faces up to the fact that the worker's are indeed few and that something must be done about it. Yet any attempts to drum up vocations through national or even diocesan campaigns are misguided. Parish clergy must be seen as the primary vector for actively encouraging vocations, as they are best placed to know the life and doctrine of candidates and to identify those with potential. Most of us will have been encouraged toward ordination by an ordained person than a conference or recruiting event.

Many churches have been engaged in the things suggested by the 'Facilitating Lay Leadership' report for decades (identifying, training, and sending out lay-leaders), though perhaps without the express permission of their episcopal leaders (i.e. ministry apprenticeships, etc.). Processes and guidelines need to be developed whereby these existing programs may be regularised. Furthermore, simplified/streamlined so that those lay-people willing to give their time and energy in service to the church are not held up because the church has no category for them.

The 'Nurturing and Discerning Senior Leaders' and the associated mini-MBA/Modular Programme/Learning Community are both encouraging and worrying. We must invest in our leaders, and the new and innovative ways that are springing up as a result of the report are encouraging. But it seems to me that the primary method of identifying leadership potential should be those with proven track record of leadership in the local church context. Psychometric testing and other such 'discernment processes' seem to me to be poor indicators of leadership potential. We need godly people who are gifted for and called to leadership, not managers who fit certain psychometric profiles.

The Simplification Task Group comes as a breath of fresh air. We must be able to navigate our legislation without needing to be canon lawyers. Likewise, the 'Optimising the Role of NCI' report outlines several areas where attention and simplification at a national level will save the time and energy of clergy in parishes.

Careful attention must be given to the implementation of the suggestions made by all the reports, so that reaching people with the Gospel remains the driving force rather than any other motives (financial or otherwise).

EDUCATION

Having only recently left theological college, I have up to date experience of the issues facing ordinands and training institutions alike. The 'Resourcing Theological Education' report envisions a 50% increase in vocations by 2020, with a particular emphasis on increasing the under-30 demographic. The danger is that this increase in vocations, alongside the proposed decentralisation of funds for certain candidates, may lead to training pathways chosen for financial efficiency rather than educational adequacy. As someone within the target demographic (just!) who has received three years of residential training, I wholeheartedly support the push toward increased vocations but insist that the experience of learning in residential community must be open to all.

HUMAN SEXUALITY

I welcome shared conversations about how the Church can minister faithfully and compassionately to everyone in society. Having reviewed many of the arguments to the contrary, I remain firmly committed to the unique place of sexual union within a life-long marriage covenant between a man and a woman. I will stand by Scripture's clear position (a position affirmed by canon B.30, Lambeth Resolution 1.10 and the latest pastoral guidance from the House of Bishops) as I am convinced that it is genuinely good for all human flourishing.

Personal History

CURRENT POST

Curate at St. Marys, Wootton

EDUCATION

Wycliffe Hall, Oxford – BTh, 2015

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium – MA in Philosophy, 2008

Wheaton College, IL, USA – BA in Philosophy, 2006

FAMILY

Married to Catherine (Charities Solicitor at Potheary Witham Weld, London) for five years. 'Pack-leader' to [Thomas] Cromwell, our four month old lurcher puppy.

To the Voter

Thank you for taking the time to read my address. I would be grateful for your support in the forthcoming election (if not as your first preference, then as your second or third). Additionally, I would be happy to field any further questions you may have by telephone or email.

Thank you,

Lucas Durant

NOMINATED BY

Revd Canon Richard Hibbert - Vicar, Christ Church, Bedford

SECONDED BY

Revd Fiona Gibson - Vicar, Cople Moggerhanger and Willington, Bedfordshire
