

From: Anthony W. Archer

September 2015



Dear Fellow Elector,

I am pleased to have this opportunity to introduce myself, explain why I am seeking re-election to General Synod, *not having served on it since 2010*, and tell you what I have been doing during the last five years and where I stand on some of the more challenging issues facing the Church of England going forward. I am most grateful to fellow Readers, **Tricia Humber** and **Richard Hackworth**, of Dunstable and Berkhamsted deaneries respectively, who have proposed and seconded my nomination.

Personal

Born in 1953, I am married to Louise and we have three grown-up children, Annabel (34), James (32) and Lucy (28), and two grandchildren. I am a law graduate and later qualified as a chartered accountant. I enjoy something of a portfolio career, since leaving full-time employment in 2010. My interests as a management consultant are in the areas of senior appointments, and board and governance consulting. However, one of the reasons for adjusting my work/life balance and stepping down from the General Synod during the last quinquennium was so that I could train to be a Reader. I was licensed in June 2013 and serve in the Berkhamsted Team Ministry.

I was first elected to General Synod in 1993 and was fortunate in being elected to a number of boards and councils, as well as being invited to join the Panel of Chairmen, on which I served for five years. My particular interests are in the areas of mission and ministry. With the benefit of my professional experience, I also focused on appointments in the Church of England, successfully moving a Private Members' Motion in 2005 which led to the report *Talent and Calling*, which recommended major changes to the way suffragan bishops, deans and residentiary canons are appointed, as well as making other recommendations. I was elected as a central member to the Crown Nominations Commission in 2005, to fill a casual vacancy. I would have stood for re-election in 2007, but for the considerable time commitment. I participated in the CNCs for the vacancies in the dioceses of Birmingham, Oxford, St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, and Worcester. I had earlier deputised for a central member on the Bradford CNC in 2002. In 2008, I was elected as one of the diocesan members for the St Albans CNC.

Synodical Experience

Diocesan Synod

House of Laity 1993 - 2010; 2013 - date
Chair, Council for Discipleship and Ministry 2014 - date
Bishop's Council 2013 - date
St Albans CNC 2008

General Synod

House of Laity 1993 - 2010
Wycliffe Hall Council 2001-2011
Crown Nominations Commission 2005 - 2007
Appointments Committee 1999-2005
Panel of Chairmen 1999-2004
Advisory Board of Ministry 1994-1999
Private Members' Motion - Senior Church Appointments 2005

Since 2013, I have enjoyed contributing more widely to diocesan affairs. I was elected to Diocesan Synod and also stood for Bishop's Council. In 2014, Bishop Alan invited me to become Chair of the Council for Discipleship and Ministry. I have taken a close personal interest in two key areas, the resourcing of the ambitious diocesan vocations strategy and the development of the strategy for lay ministry.

Reform and Renewal

The last five years have been marked by some important changes in the national Church, not least the appointment of a new Archbishop of Canterbury. There is a renewed focus on, and commitment to, mission. For the first time that I can remember, some honest analysis has been conducted into the state of the Church of England. There is a new willingness to think in new ways about how dioceses can best be supported through strategic funding of mission projects. The old ways which seemed to be no better than the management of decline are to be jettisoned. But there is a long way to go. The numerical and spiritual growth of the Church is an important goal. General Synod has a large part to play in how the Reform and Renewal programme is developed and implemented. A crucially important area for dioceses is how ministerial education is resourced and funded in the future. There needs to be vigilance to ensure that the interests and needs of the dioceses are prioritised and protected.

Discrimination in the Church of England

Throughout my time on General Synod, I argued strongly in favour of women's ordained ministry. I am delighted that the episcopate is now open to women and that Parliament has legislated to fast track women diocesans into the House of Lords, including the new Bishop of Gloucester, and with the Bishop-Designate of Newcastle, Christine Hardman, being the next Lords Spiritual when the first vacancy occurs after her election. However, there is more work to be done. I am a member of Women and the Church (WATCH) and am keen that women are supported and equipped for preferment. I also want to see more women, ordained and lay, participating in the councils of the Church, particularly at diocesan level. A key subject for debate in the next General Synod will be the follow-up work on the Pilling Report and the outcome of, and next steps in, the Shared Conversations. I have recently spent a considerable amount of time personally reflecting on issues of same sex relationships and how the Church responds. There are challenges for all in terms of hermeneutics and a shared understanding of covenanted relationships. The Church must be inclusive of all, including those who identify as LGBT. However, the Church is unlikely ever to be of one mind on this issue and needs to learn to live with difference, for the sake of the Gospel.

Please give me your first preference vote if you share my concerns on these issues. I am keen once again to be your voice on General Synod and undertake to serve the interests of the diocese, if elected. In any event, please exercise your vote prayerfully and give me the highest preference vote you feel able. If you would like to talk to me and raise any issues please call me on 07721 504125 or send an email to aw.archer@btinternet.com.

Yours sincerely,



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