



Wil Horwood MBA PGCert

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Member in the Bedford Parish of Christ Church since 2009

Governance and executive roles held:

- Chief Executive of Mission Direct, 2019-present
- Chief Executive of Hope Worldwide UK, 2008-2019
- Director of Hope Worldwide Afghanistan, 2009-2018
- Vice chair of Hope Worldwide Global's Global Coordinating Council, 2013-2019
- Founding Trustee of ICC Missions, 2003-2009
- School Governor of Wilden VA Primary School, 2014-2018
- Experienced in church planting and mentoring leaders

I am pleased to offer myself for your consideration for this role. I believe that my experiences, within the church and professionally, are relevant for the challenges that the Anglican Church faces. A combination of my skills and understanding of mission, strategy, theology, finances, safeguarding, and consensus building will all be useful for working within the legislative and debating body that is the General Synod. I am grateful to Rachel Bennett and Paul Templeman, from the Deanery of Bedford, who have proposed and seconded my nomination. Please prayerfully consider giving me your first or a high preference vote.

Personal

I was born in 1971, have been married to Trish for the last 26 years, and we have two wonderful children who both love Jesus. I grew up on the edge of the Downside Estate in Dunstable and was initially raised in the Roman Catholic faith, being baptised and confirmed at St Mary's Church in Dunstable. My father was an Anglican convert to the Catholic Church, while my mother was a German Lutheran, hence the spelling of my first name, which is short for Wilhelm and not a spelling mistake. The combination of influences from my parents' differing Christian and cultural backgrounds informs my ecumenical outlook and willingness to work with various Christian groups to ensure that the Good News and light of the Gospel is shared widely.

I grew up in an environment of relative poverty and experienced housing insecurity due to the mental health and unemployment challenges of one of my parents. Due to being half German, I also experienced discrimination at school, including from teachers and parents, and in my earlier working life. These early experiences of disadvantage initially set me back and affected my confidence, but I now see that God allowed me to experience these challenges to develop a passion for social justice and for mission, and to enable me to approach problems in a non-judgemental, empathetic, and compassionate way, while still not shying away from difficult decisions. Since the age of 21, I have regularly got my hands dirty by volunteering in front-line roles for charities that help the disadvantaged, like the homeless and people trapped in addiction, and I have been blessed to be

able to have leadership roles for the last 25 years, in mission-orientated Christian organisations that help disadvantaged people, both in the UK and overseas.

I believe I can contribute constructively to the following issues that the General Synod will address during the coming quinquennial.

Vision and strategy

I support the Church of England's vision to create a simpler, humbler, and bolder church; and I also support the strategic priorities to be a church that is younger and more diverse, where a mixed ecology is the norm (including new forms of church), and to become a church of missionary disciples. I have spent most of my adult life involved in planting churches or supporting new plantings that were outside the conventional parish system, and in training and supporting people and congregations to develop missional practices and cultures. I have experience of building youth and student ministries where young people have come to faith and then sustained that faith long-term.

Financial stress

The Church of England has tough financial decisions to make. I think that these decisions need to be made within the context of what the mission of the church is, which I believe should prioritise supporting communities of believers to thrive. When facing financial challenges there is a risk that important aspects of the church get cut because they have a cost but cannot demonstrate value in financial terms. This can have an enormous and unintended negative effect for the culture of the church and on parishioners. In my various roles governance and executive roles over the last 18 years I have learned the importance of sensitively and compassionately seeking understanding and consensus from those who will be most affected by financial decisions and have learned to question and challenge financial assumptions.

Archbishop's Commissions on housing and race

With my previously referred to childhood experiences of housing insecurity and racial discrimination, I have first-hand understanding of the toxic effects that these have on a person's development and opportunities. I also have 20 years of experience of working with homeless people, 9 years as a volunteer, and 11 years professionally. During that time, I got to understand many of the issues related to housing and homelessness and worked in partnership with local government departments as well as national and local homeless and housing organisations. This involved the management of services for street homeless, as well as running buildings-based services like hostels and supported housing, including Care Quality Commission regulated services. I believe I can provide a meaningful contribution to the debate about housing. I have found that it is possible to do harm unintentionally, while trying to do good and that when this is discovered there can be a temptation to excuse this due to good intentions rather than deal with the harm being done. Working through these issues can be painful for all involved, so much compassion, grace and honesty is required. The racial discrimination that exists in the Church of England, often in the form of unconscious bias, needs to be addressed decisively and with sensitivity.

And finally

If elected, I will seek to be available to you and to graciously represent all the Diocese. I tend to lean towards a traditional Christian faith, informed by a strong sense of compassion, fairness and justice.