

Dear Sisters and Brothers

I am standing for election as a lay member of General Synod because I love the Lord Jesus and wish to serve him through the building up of his body, the Church.

I am a 54 year old consultant psychiatrist who is married to Helen, a GP. We have three sons (24, 22 and 18) all of whom are committed Christians. My middle son is currently serving as a Ministry Apprentice in an Anglican Church in Wilmslow. We moved into the Diocese 21 years ago and, although we had previously been involved in an Evangelical Anglican church in Newcastle, we thought it was important to be involved in our village church when we moved to Great Ayton. We have therefore been members of Christ Church, Great Ayton (described by the vicar as 'middle of the road') for over 20 years. During that time I have led small groups, done 10 years as a youth group leader and have represented the church on Deanery Synod.

The Church of England faces a range of challenges in the years ahead. Many of these will be addressed in General Synod over the next few years through the 'Reform and Renewal' programme. This will be looking at:-

1. Ministerial training - ensuring that clergy have the necessary skills for Church growth
2. Lay leadership in both worship and church governance
3. Use of our historic resources to grow the church
4. Simplification of our processes to prevent them obstructing new ways of reaching out to unchurched communities, telling them the Good News and building up the Church.

I will set out below some of the experience that I have which will allow me to effectively contribute to this agenda.

I have been a member of Diocesan Synod for over 15 years, Archbishop's Council for 9 years and Diocesan Lay Chair for the past 3 years. As a member of Archbishop's Council I have seen my role as being akin to a non-executive director or critical friend. There is no point in being on Council if one does not speak up and identify areas where improvements need to be made - whilst always seeking to support the effective running of the diocese both spiritually and financially.

For the past 5 years I have been Executive Medical Director for a large NHS Foundation Trust which provides mental health services to around 2 million people in Durham, Teesside, North Yorkshire and (from 1.10.15) York. Over that time I have been part of a leadership team which has greatly improved the quality of the services we provide whilst managing with a steady reduction in resources. We have over 6000 staff delivering services from over 140 different sites with a budget of over £300m. Thus I have ample experience of leading change in a complex organisation embedded in labyrinthine bureaucracy and making the best use of resources.

I represent the trust on a range of regional and national health organisations including extensive involvement in health and medical education - developing the health professionals we need for the 21st century. As the leader of over 160 consultant psychiatrists I have had to help them recognise the change in their roles so that they can be 'servant leaders' of their teams, delegate more effectively and accept continued professional development and annual appraisal. It will not surprise you to know that I see parallels between these changes and those that are needed to equip, mentor and develop clergy for the 21st century. I would seek to contribute to the review of both initial and continuing ministerial training.

I have a long standing interest in what it means to be a Christian at work. I am a member of Christian Medical Fellowship (which links 4000 christian doctors) and was its national chairman from 2009 - 12. I regularly speak at national and international conferences, lecturing on a biblical perspective of work, what it means to be a Christian leader at work, and mental health within a biblical world view. If we are going to be salt and light in the world then we must equip and support effective lay leaders not only in the church, but also in their work and community settings.

Every area of our church life is important but ensuring that children and young people have the chance to hear about the Good News of Jesus and to be discipled in their faith is essential. For ten years I chaired an ecumenical group of local churches raising £25 000 per year to fund a full time Christian youth worker into Stokesley School. During most of that time I was also a Governor at the school. It has been my view for a number of years that the church, both at diocesan and national level, has not invested enough attention and resources in young people. One of my achievements of the last three years has been to link our diocesan youth team into the diocesan structures through the Archdeacon of York so that we can begin to consider strategically how we can support our young people and those who work with them. If elected I would be encouraging any significant change in the way the national church spends its historic resources to incorporate much greater investment in children's and young people's work - including developing ways of reaching children and young people in rural areas.

If you are considering voting for me it is important that you know how I would approach any controversial issues being considered by General Synod. I am currently studying Ephesians and I have been struck by Paul's commands in Chapter 4, 'Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another with love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' Humility and gentleness do not always come easy to me! However in any controversial issue I would seek to patiently understand the views of others, recognising that my current understanding of the matter being considered may be wrong. I will endeavour to treat those with whom I hold different views with love and respect. I recognise Scripture as being in authority over our individual and corporate lives as the body of Christ, but also recognise that whilst scripture is inerrant, my understanding of it may not be. I have in the past changed my views on important matters when I have come to the realisation that my understanding of scripture has been in error. However if after prayerful consideration of all the arguments I conclude that the overall teaching of God's Word leads to a particular conclusion then I will vote on those lines even if that is at odds with the contemporary societal view.

As members of the Church, the Body of Christ, we are all given spiritual gifts to build one another up. Among the gifts listed by St Paul are serving, leadership and administration. Please would you prayerfully consider whether I should be exercising these gifts on your behalf at General Synod.

With Love in the Lord Jesus

Dr Nick Land