

Election Address for General Synod 2015

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In a recent blog, Mission Strategist Alan Hirsch wrote, *"Becoming the church that Jesus built will require courage, because it means letting go of what we have become . . . of abandoning the security of institutional church to become a movement."*

All of us who are called to be leaders within the Church of England care deeply and passionately about the Mission of God and the Church. We see only too well her weaknesses, flaws, and complexities. The Church is an easy target for scorn and ridicule, yet at the same time she remains the Bride of Christ which God, in Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit has ordained to carry forward His mission to proclaim the Good News to the poor and to fulfill the Great Commission.

As a Synodically governed Church it is imperative that General Synod discovers a new way of working that honours the past and creates new pathways for the future. A Synod that doesn't seek to distract or hinder the Church but rather energizes and empowers the people of God to fulfill the purposes of God. This requires a body of Synod, that not simply seeks to defend any particular tradition, theology or perspective, but one that is willing to sit and listen to stories, vision, pain, to sit uncomfortably and to reflect on what God is saying and revealing before speaking prayerfully, prophetically, graciously & critically in a way that reflects what we have learnt, heard and observed but without condemnation.

I would welcome the opportunity to serve on General Synod as a representative of the Diocese of Salisbury, as the Church grapples with issues around renewal and resourcing of ministry. As we look to energize mission, develop discipleship, grow evangelism, explore leadership, release creativity, cut bureaucracy and take risks in order for the Church to flourish, and the Kingdom to grow for the glory of God.

Like many, I don't care for labels, however I would describe myself as an *"open-evangelical"* who welcomes the challenge and perspective brought by those whose life experiences and expressions of faith and worship differ from my own. I seek to be someone who is open to God, trusts His Word as revealed in scripture, is obedient to Christ and willing to follow the prompting of the Spirit.

I have served in the Diocese of Salisbury since 2006, having moved from the Diocese of London where I served my curacy at St Lukes, West Kilburn. I have held the following posts within Salisbury Diocese: Associate Vicar of Sherborne & Chaplain to St Paul's & the Gryphon School -2006 - 10; Vicar, St James Southbroom – 2010 – 15; and most recently I have been licensed as Rector of Blandford Forum & Langton Long.

I have also served as Rural Dean of Devizes and am currently the Assistant Rural Dean of Milton & Blandford as well as being a member of the Sudan Committee, Board of Education and Diocesan Synod.

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