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## **GENERAL SYNOD ELECTION 2015**

Dear Elector,

It has been a privilege to serve on Synod over the past five years. The experience has deepened my love for the national church and its role in leading the Anglican Communion worldwide. It has strengthened my desire to see the Church of England continue to take a lead in public life; General Synod plays a vital role in this. I participated in many debates in Synod 2010-2015, put down questions at every one and attended and put on fringe events (such as Safe Haven, a project providing safe homes for converts from Islam in our country).

I am Founder and Director of Christian Concern, a campaign group with 80,000 supporters and also of the Christian Legal Centre, which has handled hundreds of cases (in both British and European Courts) of Christians who have been penalised for living out their Christian faith in our nation. We deeply appreciate the support of many Anglican churches up and down the country.

### **Priorities**

#### **The Place of the Church in National Life**

I long to see our nation turn back to Christ, and the Church of England is instrumental in this. It is the role of the Church in our nation's public life to promote and live by the Word of God, and the hope that is found in Jesus Christ, for the common good of everyone. A nation prospers when it submits to the gracious rule of God (Ps 33:12); a belief that is enshrined in our nation's constitution but has sadly been forgotten.

Under God, a Church of England that holds out this hope to current generations through both its teaching and actions can lead our nation back to Christ. General Synod is of huge importance in formulating this teaching and action. Public Theology is Public Apologetics is Public Evangelism. I pray that my position as Chief Executive of an organisation, whose mission is to speak of Jesus Christ in public life, and my experience of practice at the English Bar, helps me to make effective contributions at General Synod on these issues.

#### **The Sanctity of Marriage**

Marriage between a man and a woman has come under repeated attack in recent years, so it is vital that the Church is clear on the nature and purpose of marriage according to Scripture. It is time for the Church to renew her vision of the authority of Scripture and her teaching on man-woman marriage. It is time for her to speak with clarity and confidence on marriage as God's plan for the flourishing of human society and the common good.

My Private Member's Motion on marriage at Synod received 146 signatures, although it was never debated. Christian Concern was a founding member of the Coalition for Marriage (C4M) campaign, resisting the redefinition of marriage and raising a petition with 600,000 signatures.

#### **The Sanctity of Life**

The Church of England affirms the Biblical truth that human life is made in the image of God, giving all people equal worth and dignity. In stark contrast to this belief stand two great threats to life: assisted suicide and abortion. The 2010-15 Synod took a strong public stand against the assisted suicide bill then before parliament and its continued strong stand is to be commended, especially as Rob Marris' Assisted Suicide Bill is debated in Parliament.

Nearly 200,000 abortions take place in our nation each year; 8.5 million have taken place since the Abortion Act 1967. As the Church we must also defend the sanctity of life of unborn children, the most vulnerable of persons in our society and resist experimentation on embryos. General Synod is well placed to ensure that the Church of England continues to affirm the sanctity of each human life in the face of present threats.

At Christian Concern, we have organised a number of rallies outside parliament to highlight the humanity of the unborn child and to resist assisted suicide. At the Christian Legal Centre, we brought Nikki Kenward's request for a Judicial Review of the Director of Public Prosecution's guidelines (which liberalised guidelines on assisted suicide). After the Crown Prosecution Service refused to prosecute two doctors offering abortions on the basis of the female gender of the child, we supported Aisling Hubert in her private prosecution.

### **Proclamation of Christ in Public Life**

As our nation's established church, the Church of England is well placed to defend our most important freedom upon which all other cherished values rest: the freedom of the gospel.

Over the past 15 years, I have been at the forefront of every major legal and political battle where Christian values have been challenged. I have been responsible for running many legal cases where Christians (doctors, nurses, teachers, social workers, counsellors etc.) have been penalised for witnessing to Jesus at work.

### **Other Important Issues that Synod Engages in**

Through its debates and the priorities it sets, General Synod is also the key to having an impact for Christ in other areas of importance: helping people of all ages find their vocation in Christian witness; promoting sound teaching of Christianity in RE lessons; addressing how the issue of sex education is taught in school; promoting the freedom to speak the gospel, and opposing the government's proposed 'Extremism Disruption Orders'.

### **My Background**

I fell in love with Jesus at the age of 4 after being put on bus to go to Sunday School. I cannot remember a day when I have not wanted to serve Him. In my twenties I worshipped at St Helen's, Bishopsgate. For 12 years, together with my husband and four children, I was a member of All Saints Parish Church, Lindfield and then its Fresh Expressions church planting initiative in Haywards Heath. We continue to be very involved at Grace Church; the church that was established by that initiative and now focused on a community with 12,000 new homes in Bolnore.

Prior to my current work, I practised as a barrister in criminal and family law for eight years, and pioneered the student and public policy work of the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship.

After cancer in 2008 I discovered running and every time I go out I say to myself "Lord it is good to be alive". I am looking forward to running my 10<sup>th</sup> marathon soon.

Jesus Christ is the Hope for our Nation. Let us put Him at the heart of Synod.



Andrea Minichiello Williams

*"He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the inheritance of the nations. The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy; they are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness. He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name!" – Psalm 111:6-9*