



GUY DONEGAN-CROSS

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WHAT MIGHT I BRING TO GENERAL SYNOD AND WHY MIGHT I BE A SUITABLE REP?

At its best GS flies the flag for the vision God has given us. Its phrases like “Jesus Christ centred, missionary disciples, growing younger, mixed ecology, new Christian communities, whole of life discipleship and the transformation of the world” are all wonderful. They make my heart quicken.

But the challenge is that any big vision can become wallpaper or get lost along the way. **The role of Synod and each rep is to help us as God’s people to keep coming back to “the main thing”.**

I am by nature someone who carries, inspires, and motivates around core vision. I believe I could be a rep who, amid many pressing and worthwhile concerns, will **instinctively keep focussed on these bold, simple, and humble callings.**

I hope I could do this as a rep for the vast majority of clergy across CofE Birmingham because I am **eclectic in my spirituality and have a broad range of on-the-ground ministry experience.** I sit somewhere in the middle of a biblically rooted, Christ-centred, missional, charismatic, contemplative, Ignatian place. In the simplest terms I seek to follow Christ as my Lord and love Him as my Saviour. This means that I sometimes wish I knew who my “tribe” is, but in terms of being a rep **who can bring the aspirations of a mixed group of ordained people into the GS** I think it might be an advantage.

In terms of ministry, I **have served and led in five different parish contexts**, from large to medium-sized to small, urban to suburban to small town. My current role has given me an **affinity for the breadth of this diocese and an insight to the experiences of a range of clergy**, particularly in overseeing the urban network. My patronage work has given me insight as to how **different dioceses are responding to reorganisation for mission**, and to a wide variety of ministries.

WHAT I WOULD HOPE TO ADVOCATE FOR.

Growing disciples is our primary calling and the undergirding foundation to everything else Synod deliberates on. New Labour famously prioritised “education, education and education.” I would be a **rep for “Discipleship, discipleship and discipleship.”** This is the drum I beat and has been at the heart of my parish ministry and current role. (I really support the emphasis on putting resources into growing younger, but unless we focus on discipleship **for all ages** there will be no long-term culture change.)

I’ve always been firmly committed to dismantling dualistic thinking between sacred and secular— every calling counts, every area of life matters. **Vocation is so much wider than church ministries.** I have tried to make offers around “Everyday Faith” here, and **I would be enthusiastic about a Synod which looks beyond the church and reinforces the hopes of the “Setting God’s People Free” report.**

On PLF I think the pastoral resource to offer to any couple a sense of blessing and the opportunity to see their relationship in the context of discipleship is wise and loving. I know it feels like a red-line has been crossed for some, and a holding position reached for others. I am mindful that a rep must seek to hold the differing convictions of a diverse clergy family in their mind and heart. I believe God can lead us to a place of unity in disagreement, and am committed to gritty, long-term, bearing with one another so that a loving, unifying place can be reached. I am encouraged by recent language of “reset” and “settlement, not schism”. Whether I am elected or not, I will be praying for our reps to have godly, compassionate wisdom.

There is a tension between strategic funding which invests in growth and the calling to be a church for every part of the nation, so fantastically expressed in a recent commitment to estates ministry. **I would support forward-looking strategy which can take brave decisions about our parish structures, but which is balanced with a conviction that in the Kingdom the small, the faithful, and the persevering are often most valued.** I believe our gift is to be a humble church on the margins, where success can’t be tabulated.

So I would advocate for a CofE culture which commits to the fragile, prioritises the poor, plants indigenously for the long-term, and responds with funding **when proposals have been discerned from the ground up.**

I am firmly committed to being a net-zero church and try and live this out by not flying (unless absolutely necessary), being vegetarian and using renewable energy. On safeguarding I believe external scrutiny is essential, but **we need to maintain diocesan delivery**, and I welcome the further reflection period after the Jay review. Having experienced bullying from a parishioner, and an 18-month CDM process which went nowhere, I am **firmly committed to reviewing the CDM and developing appropriate protection for clergy.** I sit on our Racial Justice board, have led the closure of a trust due to historic links with slavery, and believe that **reparations should be meaningful and transformative.**

Thank you so much for reading this. I’d be grateful for your first preference vote and would value your prayers. Do get in touch with me if you would like to discuss things further.

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PERSONAL BACKGROUND

I am married to Ruth, who is vicar of Holy Trinity Benefice in Ward End, where I get to preach and lead and oversee our children’s work. It is great to be able to serve together. We have four grown-up children and a Norfolk Terrier Bess, who drives us crackers. In my spare time I am currently part of an improvisation group at the MAC, and occasional improv evenings at 1000 Trades in the Jewellery Quarter.

CAREER AND MINISTRY

I worked as a political assistant, a teacher in China for two years and a Secondary school English and drama teacher in Bristol. I was ordained in 1999, serving as curate in Swindon, then as vicar of Emmanuel Saltburn in Teesside (7 years) and St Mark’s Harrogate (10 years).

I moved to Birmingham in 2019 to be Director/Enabler of Learning for Discipleship and Mission.

I’ve been a youth worker, school governor, Council chaplain, Reader tutor, Cathedral canon, founding chair of a project for asylum-seekers and refugees and of an ecumenical common mission forum and trustee on a Christian Education organisation (Stapleford Centre). I currently chair the Simeon’s Trustees – a patronage trust which covers over 200 benefices nationally. I’ve published Assemblies in SPCK books, a Grove Booklet called “Men and God”, and have two books coming out next year with BRF (cheeky plug!) on discipleship.