

The Revd James Moore

1. What has prompted you to stand for election to General Synod in particular, and in which ways do you think it will challenge your capacity and capabilities?

Not what, but who. Friends and colleagues suggested my experience, enthusiasm and energy would be a welcome addition to Synod, which I found encouraging, particularly knowing the significant responsibility this role carries. As such, through prayer and careful consideration, standing felt the right thing to do.

Extra roles always test one's capacity, something I am no stranger to. I foresee the greatest initial challenge being to become more closely acquainted with the processes, structures and language of General Synod. I am in no doubt that there will be other challenges as yet unseen.

2. What do you believe the Church of England should prioritise over the next five years to support mission, Christian discipleship and the flourishing of parish and other worshipping communities?

I believe the Church of England would benefit from prioritising the honest evaluation of successful mission, discipleship and flourishing across its worshipping communities. Then, through prayerful wisdom and discernment, learn from and adapt successful patterns in appropriate and sustainable ways.

I also believe the Church of England would benefit from prioritising an increase in the number of well-trained, ordained parish clergy, rather than continuing the trend towards vast parish groups, and pathways of theological education and formation that risk becoming less rigorous.

3. What should General Synod do to help the Church become safer, more accountable and more trusted, ensuring that national reforms work effectively in parishes, dioceses, and cathedrals?

Improve communication — honest, timely and transparent communication, including meaningful opportunities for considered input and response when national reforms are to be implemented locally.

Synod itself has recognised significant challenges around trust, communication and accountability. Honesty means that when reforms are evaluated and found to be ineffective, impractical or damaging, we admit this, learn from it and address the issues again. We must also guard against becoming so invested in previous decisions that admitting we were wrong becomes harder than changing course. National reforms should not simply be imposed and assumed to work; their effectiveness should be tested through the experience of parishes, dioceses and cathedrals.

4. How should the Church prioritise good intentional investment in mission and growth whilst also resourcing parish ministry in all its forms?

I believe investment should prioritise areas of proven mission and growth, while all forms of ministry should have clear objectives, strong accountability and robust review processes — neither inherited ministry nor new initiatives should get a free pass.

Resourcing parish ministry in all its forms is more nuanced. Parishes undertake remarkably varied ministries, and in an ideal world, churches would be able to offer a range of worship styles, but this must be balanced with the commitment to growth, financial sustainability and prayerful outreach.

I do not believe this is an either/or argument about forms of worship or mission. The Church should be cautious about prioritising tradition over mission, but equally cautious about prioritising modernity over faithfulness. Our aim is to bring people into a worshipful relationship with God, recognising that this may require us to move beyond our own personal preferences.

5. General Synod must address issues on which faithful Christians hold deeply differing views. How would you contribute to honest debate, good disagreement and clear decision-making while helping the Church maintain its common life and mission?

I believe this question itself highlights part of Synod's present difficulty. Phrases such as 'honest debate', 'good disagreement' and 'clear decision-making' can imply that, if we continue talking carefully enough, a mutually acceptable conclusion will eventually emerge. On some issues, I am not convinced that is true.

Faithful Christians may listen carefully, understand one another fully, disagree respectfully, yet still remain conscientiously opposed and deeply split. That does not necessarily represent a failure of dialogue; it may reflect a genuine theological divide.

My contribution would be to resist false consensus, encourage prayer, careful reading and meditation on Scripture, and listen attentively to both loud and quiet voices. I would defend my own convictions while remaining open to challenge.

Within debate, I would hold to the primacy of Scripture over the changing assumptions of a culture that often has little regard for God's word, while responding to those with whom I disagree with charity and respect.