

Richard Meryon

Rosalind and I have been married 41 years, having met when Rosalind was speaking at a military Christian meeting in London while we were both serving in the British Armed Forces. We now have 3 happily married children and 6 grandchildren. Arriving in Bath in 1995, we live in Combe Down where since then we have loved being members of Holy Trinity church. The church has grown hugely in these years, and we have benefitted from great ordained leadership including three women, one covering a Vacancy and two Curates.



In 2006 we went for 4 years with a selected team of 30 to plant a new congregation at St John's church, Peasedown St John. We then worked at the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem from 2010-2014. Since 2015 I have been seeking to infuse effective and efficient organisation into churches and charities, showing that 'excellence' is far more a question of 'effort' than of 'expense'.

Serving as your diocesan representative to the General Synod, I would want to be involved in the Church of England's effectiveness and relevancy in the 21st century, the church being the ambassador for the Kingdom of God in the UK. Good leadership, whether by the clergy or lay, will be key, as will the pastoral care of both our church leaders and her members. "There are many forms of worship, but only one Lord": until 21, I was always in Anglican 'Prayer Book' churches; now in the more evangelical churches, I appreciate the Liturgy even more, having seen how rooted that liturgy is in the Bible. The CofE is a broad church, and we all need to work shoulder to shoulder as we tackle overall church, apathy and even opposition, all the while encouraging all those of the household of faith who seek God's presence and power in our generation.

I recognize a wide variety of views on marriage and sexuality in the C of E. I would prefer not to see a change to our current doctrine, always wanting to listen to and understand the views of others, while holding my own views with compassion. In leading Christian Vision for Men (CVM), I would take sage advice from a celibate homosexual friend when handling these delicate pastoral issues. I rejoice at all that the local church is doing outside its fence into the wider community. Financial matters, racism, CDM and safeguarding are surely absolutely key challenges facing the CofE in the next few years; current trends of reducing central budgets and numbers of clergy mean that we, the lay, must step up to the mark to be alongside our ordained leaders. Taking the Church forward from this CV era gives us an exciting 'once in a century' opportunity to reap all the benefits and maybe 'do church' in new ways.

I pray that I can contribute to church growth, based solidly on the Word of God, expressed in the power of the Spirit of Jesus. Word+Spirit=Growth. As for the Bible, an American pastor once told me: "If it's plain, it's main". The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are for the building of the Body of Christ. So let us press on with discipleship, evangelism, social engagement, worldwide impact - all solely for God's Glory.

Background:

1969-1999 Served for 30 years in the RN
1971-1979 Two Royal Navy Engineering degrees
1974 Came to a living faith in Jesus at 21
1999-2009 Called out of the Navy to lead CVM
2004-2006 Diploma in Biblical Theology at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford
2010-2014 Five years leading the ministry at the Garden Tomb in East Jerusalem
2015ff Portfolio of Kingdom rôles.

Hobbies:

Grandchildren
People and so hospitality
Downhill skiing
Sailing – yachts and dinghies
Hill and coastal walking
The weekly 5km Park Run (PB 27:25)

Combe Down church involvement:

- Leading and preaching
 - at Holy Trinity Combe Down – the Benefice’s main church with its ‘Word and Spirit’ flavour.
 - in the Benefice using the CofE Liturgy in the two village churches of Southstoke and Monkton Combe.
- Home Group Leader
- International Mission Team leader 2015-2021
- Weekly Mission prayer meeting facilitator
- Monthly Persecuted Church prayer meeting
- Monthly Revival prayer meeting
- Occasional children’s ministry
- PCC, by virtue of being on the Deanery synod.

Bath ministry activities:

- Bath Deanery member
- Street Pastor, aka ‘Bath City Pastor’
- Bath Abbey volunteer guide
- Rota’d cooking at St Andrew’s church at Foxhill for our weekly lunch for 50 Mums n’ Toddlers.

National Ministry Opportunities:

- The ‘Truro’ report UK Forum for Freedom of Religion and Belief – founding member
- Working with the UK Home Office and UN High Commissioner for Refugees on resettling 30, 000 Christian Iraqi refugees in Jordan – specifically the 5000 medically qualified ones who could fill 10% vacancies in the NHS.
- Charity development with my own 2020Vision ministry.

International Ministry Opportunities:

- Ministry leader of annual skiing and sailing houseparties for Richmond Christian Holidays: <https://www.richmond-holidays.com/>
- 5-6 visits to the Middle East in normal years:
 - Trauma ministry to the many Arab refugees mainly Iraqis traumatised by IS on the Nneveh Plain in 2016 – all now in Jordan with Flame International: see www.flameinternational.org
 - Ongoing support for the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem
 - Regional Team Leader (Middle East) for Military Ministries International - see www.mmi.org.uk

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I do hope you will give me your first or at least your high preference vote: it would be absolute honour to be a lay member of the General Synod. I recognise that this will take my high priority and, if elected, I will need to tune down the pace of my involvement in many of these other Christian ministries. For my part I pledge to represent our diocese with a listening ear to all clergy and lay across the theological breadth.

