

Unfinished Business: A Pastoral and Missional Approach for the Next Decade

'That this Synod, mindful of the recommendations made in 2003 in *Called to Act Justly* (GS 1512) and in 2007 in *Present and Participating* (GS 1655), and recognising the importance of converting good intentions into real change, request the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops, in consultation with CMEAC, to take the necessary steps to implement the recommendations in paragraph 32 of GS 1844.'

Context of this report

1. The Church of England as the national Church has considerable moral, and sometimes practical, influence and is often seen as taking the lead in many areas of society where social changes are taking place. However in the area of ethnic diversity in leadership it is clearly lagging behind. (See table p.3)
2. The risk to the church of having so few minority ethnic ('ME') clergy (as well as lay leaders) is NOT that it is failing to be "politically correct" but that people from ethnic minorities will tend not to see the Church of England as "their church" and will therefore look for a church elsewhere. The Church has often said it wants to address these inequalities, it has accepted reports and recommendations, passed motions etc, but actual progress has been disappointing. This report considers the continuing problems, analyses some statistics, suggests ways of addressing certain unhelpful perceptions, and advocates a process of **positive intentionality** as a way forward as this has been shown to work in other situations. Some actions for kick-starting a process of change are proposed.
3. Part One of the most recent CMEAC report to the Synod **Present and Participating** (GS 1655) in 2007, reflected on the theological and biblical foundation for ensuring that everyone is afforded equal opportunity to be both present and participating within the Church – having a place at the table. In referring to St Paul's metaphor of 'the body' the report suggests that:

"the parts of God's body, an organic whole comprised of believers from varied backgrounds, exercising diverse gifts and talents, actively working together harmoniously, vividly paints a picture of presence and participation that can effectively reconcile broken people and a broken world.(1 Cor 12:1-13)"
4. Paragraph 28 of GS 1655 continues this theme of presence and participation in the Book of Revelation, of God's glory emerging from a broken world:

*"To establish Christian believers and worshippers from diverse cultural and social backgrounds, to allow them to openly share their gifts and talents with mutual benefit to all, to have all nations represented among those who are present and participating at the table – at every level and throughout all structures of the Church – is therefore a heavenly vision, and is an expression of God's eternal kingdom that will be a unifying and dynamic witness to a fallen world."*¹

¹ Present and Participating GS1655 p.7

5. We all have gifts, and minority ethnic Anglicans ('MEAs'), because of their experiences and the importance which is often given to extended family relationships, often have a great deal to offer pastorally. Inter-personal relationships are very significant as is an understanding of the importance of community and the wisdom of elders. In many cases their personal experience of suffering, can enable them to share the gospel from the perspective of one who suffers and makes it easy for them to stand alongside those others.
6. MEAs need to have a voice as they are part of the whole Church, and every part of that whole is important and needs to be recognised, accepted and heard. **Seeds of Hope**² reminds us of the theological truth that "*men and women of every hue and ethnic group belong to the one human race; are all made in the image of God, and [...] each is of unique worth in his sight.*"³
7. In some parts of England there are parishes with congregations who are all, or largely, of ME background. It is crucial that the church hears and understands the concerns and frustrations of its ME constituency and appreciates its enriching contribution to its mission. MEAs frequently understand marginalisation and rejection and can identify with those ignored by society because of their own experience — including, too often, their experience of the Church. The MEA voice needs to be 'heard' because they often speak a language which those outside the church can understand and relate to.
8. Some might not recognise ME concerns as being relevant and may go so far as to suggest that the black majority churches could appropriately cater for the needs of MEAs (or at least black MEAs). However, it is submitted that the vision for the Church of England, as the national Church, should be for Christians of all cultural backgrounds to feel that they are at home in it, that it belongs to them as well, and that they have an important contribution to offer.
9. The title of this report **Unfinished Business** refers to business started in 1987 with the Archbishop of Canterbury's **Faith in the City** report, which saw the emergence of a post in Church House for Black/Minority Ethnic Anglican concerns. Several reports with recommendations have come to the Synod and to dioceses pointing to what the Church can do, policies and practices it could adopt to ensure that its ethnic diversity is reflected at all levels within its structure. A very brief summary of these reports is attached at **Appendix 1**.

Actions taken following earlier reports

10. CMEAC has continued its work to increase ME vocations within the Church through their vocations *consultations* which feeds into the vocations *conferences*. A *mentoring scheme* is offered to those considering ordained ministry, and indeed to serving priests. *Conferences* have been provided to guide and support diocesan youth advisers. More details of all these are set out in **Appendix 2**.

² Seeds of Hope – General Synod publication (1991)

³ Seeds of Hope p.12, para 4.1(ii)

Progress and ‘Centres of Engagement’

11. Summaries of some encouraging examples and initiatives from seven dioceses can be found in **Appendix 3**. Each of the centres has developed its own way of engaging with work among ME people and successful action taken in one diocese may not always be appropriate in another. However it is common to all of them, first, that there is an officer within the diocese who has been given, or who has taken, responsibility for ME concerns (not necessarily exclusively); and second, that specific resources have been allocated to the work.

How much has changed?

	2001	2005	2010
ME proportion of population of England	7.9%	8.7%	12.6%
ME proportion of C of E core congregations	3.2% (2002)	4.7% (2007)	
Proportion of MEA clergy	Less than 2% (2002)	2.2%	2.8%
ME candidates recommended for ordination training, as a proportion of all candidates	2.8%	3.1% (2001-05)	3.4% (2006-09)
Proportion of MEA in senior leadership (bishops, archdeacons, cathedral deans)	1.1 % (3 bishops, 1 archdeacon)	1.1% (3 bishops, 1 archdeacon)	1.1% (1 archbishop, 1 bishop, 1 archdeacon 1 cathedral dean)
Proportion of women Church of England clergy	18%	25%	31%
Proportion of women in senior positions	4%	6%	11%
ME Proportion of MPs at General Election (UK)	1.7% (11 of 659)	2.3% (15 of 646)	4.2% (27 of 650)

12. There are some positive signs to be drawn from the above statistics. The proportion of ME people in the church’s core congregations has significantly increased. There has also been a modest increase in the proportion of ME candidates recommended for training for ordination.
13. The indications are, however, that the pace of change is very slow indeed. The ME proportion in our congregations is still barely half the ME proportion of the population as a whole; and the proportion of ME recommended candidates still lags behind the ME proportion of the congregations. It is of particular concern that the number (and proportion) of MEAs in senior leadership positions has remained static over the period, and that only two new ME people have entered a senior leadership position for the first time over the last ten years.
14. By contrast, it will be seen that the proportion of women in senior positions has increased very substantially over the period. Similarly, the proportion of ME MPs at Westminster has more than doubled. Both of these proportional increases have followed recognition that there was an imbalance to be redressed, and some determined action to do something about it.
15. More than four years on since **Present and Participating**, there is little evidence that, despite the initiatives so far taken, much has changed on the ground. Most diocesan structures and practices largely remain unchanged and the gifts of ME people continue to be underdeveloped and underused. Very few dioceses have specific

programmes for developing leadership potential, in particular seeking out and nurturing the pastoral, leadership, administrative and other gifts of its ME clergy.

Pressing need for change

16. Addressing the General Synod sessions of July 2007, debating the report **Present and Participating**, Dr Philip Giddings warned that the Synod may “*think that when we have carried a motion, amended or not, we have achieved something [.....]We carry another of these motions, and we have been this way before, and we go back to our dioceses, our parishes and our deaneries. What will happen? [. ...]the call to us is not particularly to carry this motion, but to get out there and to ensure it is done – all of us, and all of those with whom we connect.*”
17. This report brings the issues of MEAs to the General Synod agenda again, considering it together with the mission of the Church and its pastoral imperative. Through the good news of Jesus Christ, God’s mission is to bring transformation – to individual lives, to communities and to the world. Robin Greenwood quotes Duncan B Forrester: “*The work of Christ has established an equality which must be clearly expressed in the life of the church. Without equality, oneness and peace, true Christian fellowship is impossible*”.⁴
18. It is now three years since the General Synod debated the Pilling report, **Talent and Calling** (GS 1650), and passed a motion calling for the Synod to “*endorse the recommendations in chapter 10 ..., invite those responsible to give effect to them and invite the Archbishops' Council to report to Synod during 2008 on progress with implementation.*” That report also believed “*it to be desirable that the holders of senior appointments in the Church of England should broadly reflect the diversity of the clergy from among whom they are drawn – and indeed that of the Church of England as a whole*”.
19. The Church – and its various working groups and sub-committees, etc – has many times expressed excellent intentions, but actual practical change has been very limited. In his book **Jesus’ people – what the Church should do next**, Steven Croft, Bishop of Sheffield, gives the title *Finding the strength to change* to the final chapter. He encourages his readers to recognise that their strength comes through being attached to Christ, concluding by reminding us that “*we are called to live generous and sacrificial mission-shaped lives as disciples of Jesus seeking to do as Jesus did: building the Church and reshaping the world in the light of God’s love*”.⁵

Positive intentionality

20. There is definitely a need for change – to try something different. This involves introducing a new language to the Church and its structures. One helpful phrase is that of **positive intentionality** - “*Get out there and ensure it is done*”. As we shall see, this approach has already borne fruit in developing the participation of women in the Church in senior leadership.

⁴ Greenwood R (2002) *Transforming church: liberating church structures for ministry* SPCK p.32

⁵ Croft, Steven (2009) *Jesus’ people – what the church should do next* Church House Publishing, London p.77

21. 'Positive Intentionality' involves recognition that there are missing faces and missing voices and actively seeking ways to enable them to be seen and heard.
22. It is conceded that there are some drawbacks to these proposals. Some will perceive them to be a form of positive discrimination or even favouritism. Those not from an ME background may feel passed over, and other groups that they are not being given the same encouragement. These drawbacks are appreciated but we have seen that 'Positive Intentionality' does work and has contributed to genuine progress in relation to other issues. Bearing in mind the lack of progress in ethnic minority matters to date it is submitted that the time has come when 'Positive Intentionality' must be tried.
23. It is suggested that a contributing reason why there are now more women in senior roles is because bishops are intentionally asking for them as part of their team. On occasion female clergy, once identified as having leadership potential, are then sent on courses to help them develop their skills further, preparing them for positions for which they can apply with a measure of confidence. This is the idea behind the term 'Positive Intentionality' – recognising that there are members, and voices, missing from the places where decisions are made in the Church at parish, deanery, diocesan or national level, and being intentional in what is done to address this.
24. Intentionality is about thought, action and consequences. For example, being mentored by bishops has helped us see an increase in the number of female senior leaders. So we have strong indications that it works – and we wish to encourage bishops to extend that positive intentionality to their ME clergy.
25. An example of one Nottingham church taking a Positively Intentional approach is included at **Appendix 4**.

Conclusion

26. The reception of a report such as this often depends upon getting the tone right – and this can be tricky. The Church, like many other institutions, often finds it easier to hear criticism from outside its membership than from within. Every aspect of church life involves a degree of compromise and a willingness to accept that the church on earth is far from perfect, so raising issues particular to MEAs can come across as over-demanding or refusing to compromise.
27. This paper has tried to show why the Church of England ought to aspire to do better in encouraging its ME members. We have tried to show that this is both a theological and a missiological imperative and is not about keeping pace with secular ideas of equality.
28. CMEAC has asked the Synod Review Group to give attention to how people access leadership structures in the Church of England. This report has tried to show that this is lacking in relation to MEAs, and that change is required to ensure not only their presence (which the large numbers of MEAs in the pews provide) but also their participation (which urgently needs to be addressed).
29. CMEAC also has to accept that the continuing difficulty of getting MEAs properly represented in all levels of church life is a reflection, not only on the structures of

church life but on CMEAC's own strategies for change which have made only a limited difference.

30. The start of the new quinquennium offers a valuable opportunity to review how CMEAC pursues its aims and seeks change. A new CMEAC has just been elected, and the CMEAC officer, Sonia Barron, after several years of dedicated work, is leaving to pursue an ordained ministry in the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham. CMEAC, and MPA, thank Sonia profoundly for all she has achieved.
31. In the coming months, the Chair and members of CMEAC, along with the Director of MPA, will be designing a new job description for a CMEAC officer which, it is hoped, will take on board the many lessons of past years and of the Synod debate on the current report.
32. **Recommendations**
 - 1) That the GS Appointments Committee consider how it might increase representation of minority ethnic Anglicans on GS Boards, Councils and Committees.
 - 2) That the House of Bishops agree to take the necessary steps to ensure appropriate minority ethnic membership on all Bishop's Councils, and Diocesan and Deanery Synods.
 - 3) That, in order to realise the desire expressed in **Talent and Calling** (GS 1650) "*that holders of senior appointments in the Church of England should broadly reflect the diversity of the clergy from whom they are drawn*", all diocesan bishops should undertake positively to look for minority ethnic clergy who are qualified for inclusion or who could be developed that they might be qualified for inclusion on the Preferment List.
 - 4) That the House of Bishops re-affirms that all sponsoring bishops accept their responsibility to support CMEAC in promoting minority ethnic vocations.
 - 5) Request the Archbishops' Council to commission a report, for submission to the General Synod by July 2014, on the effectiveness of these recommendations, such a report to include figures on the number of appointments and co-options in each category.

Appendices 1 – 4 to this Report are available electronically on the General Synod website at <http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1281600/gsmisc994e.pdf>

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June 2011

**Published by the General Synod of the Church of England
and on sale at the Church House Bookshop**

31 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BN

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