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Called to Lead: A Challenge to Include Minority Ethnic People

Report by the Stephen Lawrence Follow-up Staff Group

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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£6.00

GS Misc 625



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A Challenge to Include Minority Ethnic People

A Report by the Stephen Lawrence Follow-up Staff Group
October 2000

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FOLLOW-UP TO THE REPORT OF THE STEPHEN LAWRENCE INQUIRY

Progress Report of the Staff Group

1. This is the report of a staff group (drawn from the Board for Social Responsibility, the Board of Education, the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns, Communications, the Ministry Division, the Statistics Department and the Central Secretariat) which has been working on the first stage of an action plan to follow up the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. The work has had a particular emphasis on building a clear picture of where we are, in terms of statistics, listening exercises and awareness training, so that we can plan for measurable change from a firm base.

A: Introduction

The Report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry

2. On 22 April 1993, Stephen Lawrence was murdered whilst waiting for a bus in Eltham in an unprovoked racist attack by five white youths. In July 1997, the Home Secretary agreed that there should be a Public Inquiry 'to inquire into the matters arising from the death of Stephen Lawrence on 22 April 1993 to date, in order particularly to identify the lessons to be learned for the investigation and prosecution of racially motivated crimes'. The Inquiry was conducted by Sir William MacPherson, advised by Tom Cook, the Right Reverend Dr John Sentamu and Dr Richard Stone; its report was presented to Parliament on 24 February 1999.
3. The Report made 70 recommendations, 66 of which were concerned with 'openness, accountability and the restoration of confidence' in the police service and 'to increase trust and confidence in policing amongst minority ethnic communities'. These included the scope and definition of racist offences, training, the care of victims and witnesses and the recruitment and retention of officers from minority ethnic communities. The remaining four recommendations concerned strategies to prevent and address racism through education. The final recommendation called on police services, local government and other relevant agencies specifically to 'consider implementing community and local initiatives aimed at promoting cultural diversity and addressing racism and the need for focused consistent support for such initiatives'.

4. One of the most important passages of the report dealt with definitions of racism and *institutional racism*:-

Racism

Racism in general terms consists of conduct or words or practices which disadvantage or advantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. In its more subtle form it is as damaging as in its overt form.¹

Institutional Racism

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.²

5. The Report made it clear that it did not regard either form of racism as particular to the police and emphasized that 'it is incumbent upon every institution to examine their policies and the outcome of their policies and practices to guard against disadvantaging any section of our communities'³. **The Archbishops' Council has recognized that the Church of England, like other institutions in society, must accept the challenge of institutional racism and repent.**

B: Theology – Responses

6. These issues have a special resonance for the Church. They go to the heart of our integrity and faithfulness to the Gospel. We invited some distinguished Church leaders and theologians to offer some thoughts and quotations:

Archbishop Oscar Romero, before he was shot, said 'Peace will flower, when love and justice pervade our environment'... But justice without might is helpless, might without justice is tyrannical. Justice without might it gainsaid, because there are always offenders; might without justice is condemned. We must then combine justice and might, and for this end make what is just strong, or what is strong just. For justice isn't out there! It isn't without us as a fact, it's within us as a great yearning. ... In my judgement liberty and equality are bad principles because they are so hide-bound by individualistic subjectivity. The only true principle for humanity is justice, inspired and nourished by love and true compassion; and justice towards the weak becomes necessarily protection of kindness. And so true peace isn't merely the absence of tension; it's the presence of justice. Our cultural identity and difference must be balanced with a clear understanding of a shared humanity and membership of one world. We need other human beings to help us to be human. We are made for interdependence, for complementarity. We are made for family, the human family, God's family. As Martin Luther King said: 'We shall have to repent in this generation, not so much for the evil deeds of the wicked people, but for the appalling silence of the good people.' (The Rt Revd John Sentamu, Bishop of Stepney)

Every so often a cataclysmic event erupts so violently within our society that it casts a shadow over us all. Stephen Lawrence's death was such an event. In one way or another, all of us have been traumatized by it and we must all respond to it. This is no less true of the Church which must look into its own soul and lead by example. I welcome the Archbishops' Council's courage in this regard. But the real tribute to Stephen Lawrence and this report will not be measured in our discussions about the report. It will be in modeling a community which is manifestly intolerant of racism. (The Revd Joel Edwards, General Director, Evangelical Alliance UK)

¹ The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report, p 20, para 6.4

² Ibid, p. 28, para 6.34

³ Ibid, p. 321, para 46.27

Ephesians is one of the most challenging letters in the New Testament. It is about a community with a vision of its own racial and religious 'dividing wall of partition' demolished because of Jesus Christ: 'He is our peace'. Much of the letter is about working this out in ordinary church life through an ethic of reconciliation rooted in common worship, in appreciating the abundance of God's generosity, and in following through practically the conviction of faith that must be united with mutual acceptance 'speaking the truth in love', and justice. The truth of the Lawrence case clearly needs to be learnt and applied by the church, not least in having lay and ordained ministry in which minority ethnic groups play a full part. (Professor David Ford, Regius Professor of Divinity, Cambridge University)

"I see you have a dark girl as your Curate. How nice." Some words of a dear gentleman who was congratulating both my curate and myself on a recent media appeal we took part in. It did not occur to him, that the 'dark girl' could actually be the vicar, with a curate of European descent. The assumption that the person from a minority ethnic background is on the fringe, rather than truly belonging within the structures of the Church, is one that is often made. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report highlights the challenge that faces the Church, to make real the true position of all from a minority ethnic background. A position which reflects the Body of Christ, not on the fringe, but belonging to, and visible at all levels. And to ensure minority ethnic people are brought within the visible leadership of the Church. (The Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Chair of CMEAC)

'As indeed he says in Hosea Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved'.' (Romans, 9.25, *NRSV*) 'Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.' (1 Peter 2.10, *NRSV*) These quotes from the New Testament reflect the early Christian experience of inclusion in the Christian community of different races and cultures and show that this reality of inclusion was absolutely essential to the character of the Christian community. (The Revd Professor Christopher Rowland, Professor of Biblical Exegesis, University of Oxford).

It is vitally important that the Church reflects on some of the institutional issues provoked by the Stephen Lawrence report. Institutions are often unthinking, unkind, and even sexist and racist. It is a Gospel obligation that the Church, more than any other institution, think and pray about the ways in which this might sometimes be true of the Church. It is then necessary for us all to take seriously the results of such thinking. (Professor Ian Markham, Liverpool Professor of Theology and Public Life)

7. Attached as **Annex 1** is an essay by Sister Lorraine Dixon *A Reflection on Black Identity and Belonging* which explores the experience of being Black and belonging to a mainstream Church, and affirms the Christian heritage of Black Baptists, Black Anglicans and Black Methodists 'for it is in unearthing that heritage that we begin to dispel the myth of our own invisibility and claim our rightful place at the table of fellowship'.

C: General Synod and Archbishops' Council: Action Plan

8. In the summer of 1999, Bishop John Sentamu addressed the General Synod (having previously spoken to both the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops) about the Report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and the particular challenges which this posed for the Church of England. He

described his own draft 'agenda for action' and identified two particular strands:

- to examine how the Church of England can be part of helping police services deliver an appropriate and professional service in terms of the Report's recommendations and the Government's response, acting 'in critical solidarity in supporting police services to implement the recommendations'; and
 - 'to take into her own lifeblood the implications of the findings of the report in terms of her own attitudes to and treatment of different minority ethnic groups in her body: an agenda for action for putting her own house in order'.
9. Bishop John said that the Church of England 'is still socially glued together by a culture that is monochrome i.e. white. It still lacks colour and spice'. He urged the Church to monitor what is actually happening and create programmes for change. In response, the Archbishop of Canterbury emphasized the importance of 'metanoia' (a radical change of heart) and the need for the Church to take a real lead in celebrating the wonderful diversity of humankind 'recognizing others, wherever and wherever they are, as a gift of God to us, as part of the meaning that he intends for us'.

Stage One of an Action Plan

10. In November 1999, the Archbishops' Council presented its second report to the General Synod. Part of that report set out the first stage of an action plan (attached as **Annex 2**). The plan reflected a good deal of work in progress within the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns and the Boards of Education and Social Responsibility, including what had been learned from the approach of the Metropolitan Police with its emphasis on listening and up-to-date statistics, training and measurable targets. The follow-up to the action plan is set out in para. 15-64 below.

D: The Wider Scene

11. The Report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry has triggered a number of initiatives ecumenically and within the Churches (i.e. our ecumenical partners) and within dioceses. We have not tried to summarize all that is happening, but what follows is a snapshot of a some initiatives.

12. CMEAC's *Good Practice for Dioceses* (a compendium of good practice derived from many years of diocesan visits) describes some diocesan initiatives. Roughly a third of dioceses in a recent survey have launched specific initiatives to address the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report. The Diocese of Southwark has recently received and approved the report of an independent inquiry chaired by Sir Herman Ouseley which reviewed the diocese's current policies, procedures and structures against legal requirements and best race equality practice; the report made a wide range of recommendations about how minority ethnic Anglicans can be enabled and encouraged to take a bigger role in the leadership and ministry of the Church and its structures. The Bishop of Birmingham has commissioned an independent report into the diocese's practices, and the Diocese of Bradford is planning a similar review. The Bishops' staff of Blackburn, Chester, Guildford, Sheffield, Gloucester and Manchester dioceses have undergone racism awareness training, and several other dioceses have arranged training for their senior staff. The Diocese of Ripon and Leeds has developed a special information pack for their clergy about other faith issues and minority ethnic concerns. The dioceses of Blackburn and Birmingham have developed their own study packs for parishes, using CMEAC's *Seeds of Hope in the Parish study pack* as a resource.
13. The Churches Commission on Racial Justice is finalizing its strategy for the next five years. In the follow-up to the Stephen Lawrence report the Commission has organized two conferences. A youth education and information pack on policing, employment and education rights is planned. The most significant areas of responsibility continue to be promotion of Racial Justice Sunday on the second Sunday of September and the administration of the Ecumenical Racial Justice Fund. The resource material produced for Racial Justice Sunday has highlighted the issues raised by the Lawrence report and for greater awareness in the churches. The Fund has provided critical support over a number of years for local work as well as networks and campaigns, including the Lawrence family campaign. The main sources of finance for the Fund are Christian Aid, the Church Urban Fund and the Racial Justice Sunday Appeal. Anglican giving through the appeal represents a small percentage of the total income. Plans are now under discussion for having a special Racial Justice Week in 2001.
14. Mention should be made in this context of the work which has gone on both nationally and in dioceses and parishes about immigration and asylum – issues which have caused considerable concern among minority ethnic communities who have felt threatened by the xenophobic tone of much public debate and comment and by the racism which this can all too easily

succour. There is a long tradition of bishops' involvement in refugee cases and bishops have played a highly active role in the Lords in urging a more humane and compassionate treatment of asylum seekers, and in dioceses, parishes and colleges many church members have taken a leading (and sometimes very exposed) role in offering help and hospitality to locally settled refugees. Recently bishops led delegations to the leaders of the three main political parties to press the view that it is morally incumbent upon all, especially those standing for or occupying political offices and working on political campaigns, to exercise the utmost care and restraint in the language used to discuss any issue, such as asylum applications, with the potential to raise racial and ethnic tension. The leaders gave assurances that they would quickly disown any party candidate or member approving, condoning or encouraging resentment against residents, immigrants or asylum seekers on the basis of their colour or ethnic origin in party political activity.

Equal Opportunities Policy

15. Equal Opportunities policies play an important part of combating racism and much work has gone into implementing a comprehensive policy within the national Church institutions.
 - The national Church institutions launched its Equal Opportunities Policy in January 2000 and also sent it to all dioceses, diocesan bishops and organisations allied to the Church (e.g. the Mothers' Union).
 - This launch was accompanied by training for staff tailored to their responsibilities under the policy. So far 500 staff have attended training.
 - Harassment Advisers were appointed and trained whose role it is to support and advise staff who think they may have been subject to some sort of harassment or discrimination.
 - An Equal Opportunities Monitoring Group was set up to monitor the organisations' adherence to the policy as well as to help the organisations embrace the policy proactively
 - A complaints procedure was put in place to ensure complaints of harassment and discrimination are dealt with fairly, openly and in a timely way. It has already been used during the year.
 - A revised recruitment and selection policy has been consulted upon and will be implemented shortly.

- The issues of equality of opportunity and feedback from the training of staff /implementation of the policy have been taken to each senior management group for discussion and to help future planning.

E: Follow-up to the Action Plan

- (a) **Initiatives to help implement the recommendations of the Inquiry's report with reference to the Police etc.**

3rd Party Reporting

16. An initiative which has specifically been developed in response to the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry is that of third party reporting. One of the encouraging signs of the Metropolitan Police since the Lawrence report was published has been its willingness to talk to all faiths. The Board for Social Responsibility has had monthly conversations with the Racial And Violent Crimes Task Force since the beginning of 1999, involving as well those from the dioceses in Greater London and the Churches Commission for Racial Justice. This has led to the launch of two sites in Battersea and in Waltham Forest where people can go (other than a police station) to report racial and other hate crimes. The churches have been a full part of this, and there are now plans for a large pan-London celebration in 2001 for Racial Justice Week which would bring together the police and the faith communities. Hard lessons have been learned about the failures of the stop and search policies in these discussions, but there have been wonderful signs of reconciliation and common working. A particular tribute should be paid to DAC John Grieve who addressed the Archbishops' Council in December 1999 and whose leadership has worked tirelessly to bring Church and police together.

Police Chaplaincy

17. There are currently some 350 (mainly part-time) police chaplains. Following consultation with regional Bishops' groups, a framework for police chaplaincy (in terms of the parameters of the work and accountability) has been commended to dioceses for adoption as they see fit.

(b) Educational initiatives and resources to help schools and church groups address issues of cultural diversity

18. The Board of Education held training activities throughout last year for diocesan teams on Racism awareness etc, built around the research project *Valuing Cultural Diversity in Rural Primary Schools*. The resource material for schools is now at proof reading stage and will be on our website and with the dioceses shortly. Board staff continue to discuss with the dioceses issues such as the numbers of minority ethnic governors on the governing bodies of Church of England schools and issues to do with exclusion.

(c) A statistical exercise to gather figures from a sample of dioceses to determine how minority ethnic people are now represented in the life of the Church – so that we can assess what has changed since *How We Stand* (1994); and so that we have a secure statistical basis from which to set future targets and objectives.

19. This is the second time that the Statistics Unit has carried out a survey on the participation of minority ethnic Anglicans. In 1994 it produced the report *How We Stand*. During the first six months of 2000 an updated version of the questionnaire used for *How We Stand* was distributed by diocesan offices to each parish in the following nine dioceses: Blackburn, Chelmsford, Exeter, Lichfield, Liverpool, London, Newcastle, Southwark and York. More details are given in Annex 3.

Background demographics

20. Both the surveys found a range of participation of minority ethnic Anglicans across different dioceses. When looking at the findings from the surveys it may be useful to consider also the proportions of people from various ethnic backgrounds in different regions of the country. The Office for National Statistics estimates that 7% of the population of England are from minority ethnic backgrounds. However this varies from 1% in the South West to 25% in London. For more detail see Table 1 of Annex 3.

Findings from the 2000 survey

21. One way of analyzing the data from the survey is to group together those parishes that reported similar answers to the question 'What percentage of the total population of your parish is from a minority ethnic background?'. 1,922 forms were received from clergy and PCC secretaries which could be analyzed in this way. These forms constitute a 60% response to the

survey. It is significant that 1,480 of the forms came from parishes that thought under 5% of the total population of the parish were from a minority ethnic background, and 442 from parishes that thought 5% or over were from a minority ethnic background but of these only 37 came from parishes that thought over 50% were from a minority ethnic background.

22. When we look at the numbers of adults attending church in these areas we find that for the largest group of parishes (under 5% of the population from a minority ethnic background) only 1% of the total (1,370 adults) are from a minority ethnic background, although interestingly the proportion of children and young people (under 16 years of age) from a minority ethnic background is much higher at 3% (890 children and young people).
23. As we focus on areas with a much higher percentage of their population from a minority ethnic background we find the percentage of people attending church who are from a minority ethnic background becomes much higher. For example in those areas where 10-24% of the population are from a minority ethnic background, 16% of adults attending church (2,580 adults) are from a minority ethnic background, likewise in areas where 25-50% of the population are from a minority ethnic background we find that 41% (3,780 people) are from a minority ethnic background and in areas where over 50% of the population is from a minority ethnic background, 54% (1,480 people) are from a minority ethnic background.
24. These are encouraging figures and indeed the percentages for children are even higher.
- Where 10-24% of the population are from a minority ethnic background 26% of children attending church (1,400) are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
 - Where 25-50% of the population are from a minority ethnic background, 50% of children attending church (2,000) are from a minority ethnic background.
 - Where over 50% of the population are from a minority ethnic background, 66% of children attending church (640) are from a minority ethnic background.
25. What is however much more worrying is that the number of clergy that are from a minority ethnic background is very different. Instead of 16%, 41%, and 54% for attenders the percentages for clergy are 7% (21 clergy), 8% (16 clergy) and 12% (7 clergy). Why might this be the case? One answer is given in the percentages of churchwardens and PCC members who are

minority ethnic Anglicans. We find that these percentages match the percentages of adults much more closely.

26. The problem seems to lie in some sort of obstacle that has prevented minority ethnic Anglicans to move beyond being churchwardens to becoming Readers and still less to becoming clergy. Colloquially this might be called a glass ceiling and this finding which is deeply significant is taken up later in the report when we talk about vocations. For those who want to study the figures more closely they are given in **Annex 3**.

27. A number of other points are worth highlighting.

- The percentage of children and young people under 16 attending church who are from a minority ethnic background is much greater than the percentage of adults who are from a minority ethnic background.
- The percentage of people on electoral rolls who are from a minority ethnic background is lower than the percentage of adult attenders from a minority ethnic background although it is not that much lower. We need to consider why this is so. One factor is that in urban dioceses (where most minority ethnic Anglicans live) the figures for electoral rolls and average attendances are much more similar than in more rural diocese (where the electoral roll figures are often much higher) (see *Church Statistics*, GS Misc 611). More detailed research would be needed to investigate these relationships. However the relatively low electoral roll membership of minority ethnic Anglicans, when compared with regular church attendance, means that relatively fewer minority ethnic Anglicans are entitled to vote in PCC elections or be elected to PCCs.

Analysis of data by diocese

28. We received replies from Blackburn, Chelmsford, Exeter, Lichfield, Liverpool, London, Newcastle, Southwark and York dioceses and we value all of the replies. However we have decided to focus in this report on those dioceses where the response rate was 65% or over. There are four dioceses where the higher response rates mean we can be more certain of the results of the survey. These are Blackburn, Lichfield, Liverpool and Southwark where the response rates varied from 65% to 104% (the latter indicating more replies than parishes).

29. The numbers and percentages in the table below are all based solely on the responses to the survey. For dioceses where the response rate is fairly high more confidence may be held that the percentages are representative of the whole diocese. Where the response rate is lower it is harder to know whether the percentages are representative of the whole diocese. Without knowing the percentage of people from a minority ethnic background in each parish in a diocese it is not possible to estimate whether the responses are representative of the diocese.

Table A: Analysis of data by diocese

Diocese	Number of Forms received and input	Forms as a percentage of parishes	Children and Young People under 16 years old		Adults attending services on a normal Sunday		Church Electoral Rolls		Clergy	
			Number who regularly attend church	Number (& %) from a minority ethnic background	Average number attending services on a normal Sunday	Number (& %) from a minority ethnic background	Number on church electoral rolls	Number (& %) from a minority ethnic background	Number of clergy	Number (& %) from a minority ethnic
Blackburn	152	65%	5,450	100 (2%)	13,490	120 (1%)	27,300	90 (0%)	191	1 (1%)
Lichfield	419	98%	6,110	370 (6%)	23,940	550 (2%)	48,450	580 (1%)	488	9 (2%)
Liverpool	218	104%	6,690	180 (3%)	19,600	760 (4%)	29,810	190 (1%)	285	4 (1%)
Southwark	230	76%	8,180	2,355 (29%)	21,050	4,090 (19%)	36,130	5,130 (14%)	405	28 (7%)

Note: All numbers except for clergy numbers have been rounded to the nearest ten. All percentages were calculated before numbers were rounded and are shown to the nearest whole percentage.

The numbers in the above table show only the numbers of people (electoral roll members, clergy etc) recorded by parishes that replied to the survey, they have not been grossed up to give estimates for whole dioceses.

Clergy numbers include all clergy recorded on forms. These may include full-time, part-time, stipendiary, non-stipendiary, local ordained ministers and retired clergy. Those clergy who serve more than one parish that responded to the survey may be included more than once; the clergy numbers in predominately rural areas may therefore appear relatively high.

Comparison with 1994 survey

30. The 2000 survey found broadly similar levels of participation by minority ethnic Anglicans, in terms of church attendance and electoral roll membership, to those suggested by the 1994 survey. In each of the nine dioceses the percentage of Deanery Synod members from a minority ethnic background was significantly lower than the percentage of adults attending

church on a normal Sunday who were from a minority ethnic background. Both surveys found major geographical clusters of minority ethnic Anglicans in London and Southwark dioceses, which in turn reflects population diversity across the country. For further details see Annex 3.

Conclusions:

31. We think the following points emerge clearly from the statistics:

- There are many parishes with significant numbers of minority ethnic Anglicans. In areas with a high percentage of minority ethnic population, the Anglican parishes are representative of the surrounding areas.
- Children are especially prominent in these parishes. This means that youth and children's work should be a priority.
- Lay leadership from minority ethnic Anglicans is there, in terms of churchwardens, PCC members, etc.
- A critical issue is the fact that minority ethnic clergy are drastically underrepresented in these parishes. There is also some problem with deanery synod membership. Attention must be given to the issue of vocations to ordained ministry. This point is taken up again in the section on vocations below, and in the final recommendations of the report.
- The 2000 survey found broadly similar levels of participation in terms of church attendance and electoral roll membership to those suggested by the 1994 survey.

Vocations

32. We also studied statistics from the Ministry Division (covering the last 5 years) for the number of candidates other than 'UK (white)' who were sponsored and recommended for ordination training. Based on the statistics available (which we realize may not show the whole picture) the number of indigenous minority ethnic Anglicans starting training amounted to 1-4 in the last four years, i.e. up to 0.5% of the total per annum. The total number of minority ethnic clergy (in parochial and other ministries) in the Church of England is currently around 200.

33. To judge the training figures in perspective, one 'rule' is to assess in relation to the proportion of minority ethnic Anglicans. In *How We Stand*, it was suggested that (depending on what assumptions one made in respect of 'non-return' parishes) the proportion of minority ethnic Anglicans in the totals for Usual Sunday Attendance varied between 1.5% and 2.4%. On that ratio, the proportion of minority ethnic Anglicans starting ordination training would have to increase by between three and five times to reflect the numbers of minority ethnic Anglicans worshipping in our churches. The figures speak for themselves.

34. The CMEAC Report *Serving God in Church and Community* (GS 606) on two Vocations Conferences for minority ethnic Anglicans found that many participants had felt very isolated and unsupported by official church structures in responding to their vocations. There was a palpable sense of the pain which participants had felt in experiences of rejection and discouragement; but also encouragement from the experiences of minority ethnic people serving as Readers, prison and university chaplains. The Conferences showed the importance of role models with whom minority ethnic people can identify, and encouragement:

although some people think that young people are brashly self-confident, this is not always true, and particularly not so within minority ethnic communities, where it is still a cultural norm to be self-effacing and modest, incorrectly interpreted as diffident. It is important that those holding positions of responsibility within the dioceses begin to understand this and realize the need for very real encouragement to minority ethnic Anglicans in terms of fulfilling their vocations (The Revd Charles Lawrence, Chair of CMEAC Vocations Sub-Committee, from the introduction to the report).

(d) Listening to minority ethnic people both through existing networks and recent surveys and through focus groups to hear what they are saying and feeling about the Church and what they wish to see changed.

35. Two reports by CMEAC have been published which speak eloquently of the feelings of young minority ethnic Anglicans in particular. *Simply Value Us* (published June 2000) was a research report about the feelings of minority ethnic young people inside and outside the Church of England. *Serving God in Church and Community* (GS Misc 606) is a report of two Vocations Conferences for minority ethnic Anglicans held in 1998 and 1999. Both reports underline the need to recognize, value and nurture the gifts and callings of minority ethnic Anglicans much more effectively than we do at present.

36. We have also commissioned a report of focus group discussions in Gloucester, Birmingham and London among churchgoing minority ethnic Anglicans over 16, and non-churchgoing minority ethnic young people aged between 18 and 35. (We were particularly anxious to listen to the views of those outside the Church as well as those within.) Each discussion lasted approximately 80 minutes. The moderator was Abi Adeniran for Hothouse Market Research. The research objectives were to gather the perceptions, attitudes and expectations of both ethnic minority church members and non-church members about the Church of England. A further aim was to elicit guidance on ways to effectively increase the participation of ethnic minority church members in the laity as well as the clergy. The main findings of the report are summarized below.

Hopes

37. Regardless of thoughts and apprehension, church attending Anglicans hoped the discussions would offer a forum for minority ethnic people to be honest about experiences with the 'unwelcoming' attitude of the Church of England and its white majority members; 'to address the inherent racism' within the Church of England; and to 'involve more children in the church' by instigating Bible lessons in schools.
38. Non-church attending young people hoped the discussions would be about 'how Black people's lives are affected by racism' and about what the Church of England and the police forces are doing to eradicate it because 'it severely affects career opportunities and having a fulfilling life in this country'.

Experience of belonging to the Church: 'alienated, lonely and excluded'

39. Although grounded in faith, churchgoing Anglicans overwhelmingly described their experience as 'alienated, lonely and excluded' and 'elevating yet disappointing', that the Church of England is stuck in its ways and difficult to make change and that the Archbishops' statements and policies are not filtered down.
40. Positive experiences have been 'an invitation by the priest to be a church warden', meeting 'some sincere people', 'church members support, when my wife fell ill' and the Church's scope for 'broad theology'. Less helpful experiences have been the Church of England's 'slowness to make changes' and 'inadequately trained church personnel' especially during interregnum. It is remarked that, for example, 'dealing with racism within

the church has been endlessly debated, yet no change has come and it's completely driven by secular concerns'. Stereotyping was also deeply expressed as a less helpful experience with 'priests assuming one can't do certain things because one's from a different background. They won't even ask you.'

41. They believe that improvement in the Church of England will be gained from having active young leadership, young people seeing ethnic minority role models in high positions within the Church, a warm welcome from majority white church members at all levels and training vicars to 'practice equal opportunities and be leaders of people rather than just spiritual leaders'.

Non-churchgoers' perceptions: 'Boring services, strange language, strange clothes'

42. Respondents described a perception of elitism because church 'people there think they are better than anyone else', its role in 'slavery and oppression of Black people' and a turn-off as broadcast on TV with 'boring services, strange language and strange clothes'. A young Black* person will be motivated to attend the Church of England by either being 'brought up in that faith' or 'a warm welcome and peer attendance'.

People, people, people are what count

43. Both churchgoing Anglicans and non-church attending young people were asked to prioritize a list of twelve issues faced by the Church of England. Their top three priorities were 'Spreading Jesus' Message', 'Working for Social Justice and Tolerance' and 'Caring for People' respectively and the bottom three priorities were 'Conducting Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals', 'Debating Human Sexuality' and 'Looking After Historic Church Buildings' respectively. 'Accompanying People on Their Spiritual Journeys' particularly featured more highly among non-church attending young people than churchgoing Anglicans.
44. An orientation towards people's lives, the role of the Church in helping people to 'know God' and 'Christ's example' heavily influenced their prioritization. It was emphasized that 'we have to care for people on a one-to-one basis'. Other issues that respondents strongly felt should have been included on the list of priorities are tackling racism because 'on

* 'Black' is the term used by the author of the report. 'Minority ethnic' is a wider term which embraces - but is not confined to - Black people.

Sunday TV, we see no Black people in church', assistance with employment because 'it's a difficult area of life for ethnic minorities', visionary goals such as 'changing the hierarchical structure of the Church of England', and improving the Church of England's internal and external 'communications'.

Church leaders speaking out

45. Generally, churchgoing Anglicans felt that church leaders 'take too long to make a decision and by the time that they speak out it's too late' and that many church leaders are fundamentally 'inexperienced with ethnic culture and unaware of the constituents of racist behaviour'. Respondents felt that 'no view was given by the Church of England on Stephen Lawrence'. Non-church attending young people felt that in contrast, leaders of Black majority churches did speak out and gave 'positive reinforcement'. It was felt that the Church does not speak out effectively on any of the listed priorities. Its attitude is described as 'quiet and lukewarm'. Non church attending young people were particularly critical.

46. Respondents unanimously felt that the Church should speak out on spreading Jesus' message, social justice including racism and asylum seekers because 'it has a responsibility', helping the local communities with 'housing and youth groups for Bible study' and reform to 'bring the Church into the 21st century multicultural society'.

Flatter organisational structure

47. The singular most important change churchgoing minority ethnic respondents require is that the structure and hierarchy should be flatter with less power vested in few hands as well as better relationships through communications and contact with laity.

Enlisting more Black clergy and lay leaders

48. Their suggestion for enlisting more clergy and lay leaders from minority ethnic backgrounds is to encourage more young people, through schools and colleges, into ministry in conjunction with providing the selectors of ministers with racism awareness training.

Position of Black people in the Church of England

49. Respondents felt that Black people in the Church of England today were considered, similarly to most institutions, to be few, marginalised and

poorly treated. It was remarked that 'the name, Church of England says it all, only for English people' and felt that there were no Black priests and 'white people want a predominantly white-led church'.

Colour blind in 2020

50. Churchgoing Anglicans hold that the Church of England will not be extinct by the year 2020 but will exist forever. It will simply evolve and 'if we believe in Pentecost, it will not become extinct'. These respondents also feel that the church's population is declining but that a younger population will replace the ageing population. Further that it will change drastically and eventually become 'colour blind'. Non churchgoing young people also do not anticipate that the Church of England will be extinct but greatly diminished because 'people will leave to go to better, modern churches'.

51. We are most grateful to Mr Abi Adeniran for undertaking this sensitive and important work.

Listening group of minority ethnic General Synod members

52. We also arranged a listening group of eight minority ethnic members of the General Synod, which was facilitated by staff and took place in York at the July Sessions. What was said reflected experiences of Church life at parish, diocesan and national levels. What follows is a summary of the main points.

Stereotyping

53. Much frustration was expressed at stereotyping – the expectation that minority ethnic people would only speak on certain issues, only come from one class, only reflect one church tradition, only have one viewpoint and only represent other minority ethnic Anglicans.

They assume you can only represent Black people, as if your other interests are irrelevant ...you are not seen as a rounded human being.

Engaging people with the issues

54. It was felt that people were apathetic about the issues and events such as Racial Justice Sunday; and 'don't see the issues as being about Gospel values eg the contradictions of xenophobia and the commandment to love your neighbour....'

Diocesan and General Synod

55. Mixed views were expressed. On the one hand it was felt that it could be very difficult to get elected (by a predominantly white electorate) and that the Synod could seem 'very formal and non-relational' and 'secular'. It was also felt that there was a lack of opportunity to contribute; that the gifts and experience of minority ethnic members were too often overlooked; and that the 'same people' seemed to be asked to speak and to take on representative roles: 'You need to educate people to give minority ethnic Anglicans leadership roles....' On the other hand, there was a feeling that much had changed for the better since the 80s, that other Synod members had been 'very friendly, asking for dialogue...gracious and generous'.

What can be done: vocations and leadership

56. Leadership was identified as crucial in achieving change, even if it took a long time to permeate down. More vocations needed to be identified, and more done to recognize the gifts of minority ethnic Anglicans and give them positions of authority, but this needed to be done supportively.

You must support and mentor those you put into positions of responsibility...if not, you are programming people to fail, and that simply reinforces stereotypes....

57. It was suggested that targets should be set and monitored for bringing minority ethnic Anglicans more fully into the ministry and leadership of the Church, and that a special effort was needed to reach out and nurture young people from minority ethnic backgrounds. People should be encouraged to become role models and given positive publicity. If minority ethnic clergy and laity were promoted more readily to positions of authority in dioceses and cathedrals, this itself would encourage vocations and a greater sense of accessible opportunity. Critical in enabling all this to happen was training and awareness raising, particularly of the leadership.

What can be done: justice and engagement

58. Frustration was expressed that people did not engage with events such as Racial Justice Sunday with any sense of distinctive value; too much was 'put onto' minority ethnic Anglicans to take the lead or 'perform'. 'It should be the white people who are engaging...they shouldn't make Black people do the work...minority ethnic people ought to be kept out that one

Sunday and allowed into the 51 other Sundays....' When wrong things were said, it was important that white people spoke out and did not leave it to others. And people needed to match words with deeds.

59. There was also concern as to what 'sourced' people's engagement: was it guilt or joy?

We need to decide whether to source [this work] in the ontological reality of the Church or political correctness...Patmos was a multi-ethnic charismatic community....

60. Communication was also identified as an issue.

We need to communicate differently...it is no good operating at the majority level....

One wish ...

61. Group members were invited to say what 'one thing' they would most like to see happen or change in the Church of England:

- Challenge assumptions and stereotypes that minority ethnic Anglicans do not have an important role to play; are not capable; and come from elsewhere 'not the UK';
- Keep equality of opportunities in all areas of the Church's mission;
- Racial justice based on Christ's teaching;
- Be loving and obedient to the Scriptures; focus on 'relational' ways of being the Church;
- Give time on the GS agenda to discussing the Stephen Lawrence report.

(e) A commitment – starting with the Archbishops' Council – to experiential learning about racism to engender a new sense of shared understanding and urgency.

62. Last December DAC Grieve (who has spearheaded the Met's own response to the Inquiry) addressed the Archbishops' Council about the value of experiential learning in particular in helping officers to recognize

the persistence of racism and develop a personal as well as corporate commitment to change.

63. In May a group of members from the Archbishops' Council and CMEAC, together with senior staff, underwent a 24-hour workshop led by staff from MELRAW (the Methodist and Ecumenical Leadership Racism Awareness Workshops). The training and indeed the related experiences of the CMEAC members did inculcate a powerful sense of what it is like to be part of a minority and to be on the end of both deliberate and unwitting racism in all its pernicious forms – both in Church and society. Further workshops are being arranged for other members and staff of the Archbishops' Council. We were left in no doubt as to the value of racism awareness training – and not just as a 'one-off' but as part of a sustained programme of learning and awareness raising.

What we have learned

64. The picture which emerges from the statistics and the 'voices' is far from monochrome and we need to be wary of drawing over-simplistic conclusions. Nevertheless some clear messages emerge, which might be summarized as follows:

- The Church of England in 2000 in many cities is ethnically rich, culturally diverse and vibrant. In such places minority ethnic Anglicans play a critical role in sustaining the life and witness of the Church – indeed in many places the local church would collapse without their participation. And yet they are a long way from being fully drawn into the leadership and ministry of the Church: there is a perceptible 'glass ceiling' beyond church wardens;
- Minority ethnic children form a very considerable (and disproportionate) proportion of the children in our churches in some dioceses – and their subsequent loss to the Church in later years is therefore a particular sadness;
- The fact that the number of minority ethnic Anglican vocations has been so small is a particularly serious cause for concern;
- The Church structures can seem cold and non-relational in ways which discourage participation particularly among minority ethnic Anglicans;
- Minority ethnic Anglicans too often feel stereotyped, unwelcomed and undervalued by other Anglicans; their perceptions and the statistics

confirm the Archbishops' Council's recognition of the reality of institutional racism, notwithstanding the progress achieved since the 80s;

- Minority ethnic non-churchgoers feel the Church is 'lukewarm' about issues of concern to them, and 'elitist'; they were particularly critical of the Church on a number of scores;
- Education and effective training are very important in changing attitudes;
- There is a strong desire among minority ethnic Anglicans to participate more fully in the leadership of the Church.

Themes for the next stage of an action plan

65. We believe the next stage of the action plan should focus on the following areas/themes:

- a) Education and training:** we hope that the lead given by the Archbishops' Council will underline the importance and value of church leaders having racism awareness training. We need to ensure that effective resources for training and education in racism awareness and cultural diversity are in place and taken up, particularly by those in leadership positions, and that there are proper mechanisms to monitor and develop the quality of those resources and their effectiveness;
- b) Young people:** we need to build on the findings of *Simply Value Us* and engage more effectively with minority ethnic young people, addressing why there is such a fall-off from the number of minority ethnic children in our churches and how this can be reversed, and recognizing the importance of detached youth work to keep in touch with contemporary youth cultures;
- c) Vocations:** drawing on the work of the Ministry Division and CMEAC (in *Serving God in church and community* and in the work of its Vocations Sub-Committee) we need:
 - a long-term aspiration or objective for vocations which is at least proportionate to the strength of minority ethnic Anglican participation in our churches (e.g. a three- to five-fold increase over ten years);

- to put together a long-term strategy to achieve this which
 - draws in the experience and mentoring/role model potential of clergy and leaders in parishes with substantial minority ethnic communities (through regional and national meetings) to 'seek out the seekers';
 - draws in the experience of other churches (e.g. other parts of the Anglican Communion and the Black Majority Churches) to nurture potential vocations (in the widest sense – lay and ordained) from school onwards.

The long-term objective would not be a 'quota' but would provide a context against which to measure and monitor progress (with regularly published figures) and to energize the long-term strategy outlined above.

- d) **Nurturing new leaders:** we need to plan more methodically how we can identify the gifts of minority ethnic Anglicans more effectively and place them with appropriate support in leadership positions; this will require us to look at our appointment processes and evaluate the role which our existing leaders can play in mentoring etc.
- e) **Police and society:** we commend the work which Bishop John Sentamu, the Board for Social Responsibility and others have been doing with the police on initiatives such as third party reporting and welcome the work with refugees and asylum seekers; it is important that these initiatives are continued and taken up more widely.

Conclusion: The Challenge

- 66. Two weeks after this report is debated at General Synod we will enter the season of Advent and we will look again for that coming of God which is so plainly set out in the Jewish scriptures. In the words of Eucharistic Prayer F in *Common Worship*, 'Embracing our humanity Jesus showed us the way of salvation; loving us to the end, he gave himself to death for us; dying for his own...' It is this context which should be the beginning of any theological response to the place of Black, Asian (and any other minority ethnic) Anglicans inside the Church of England. Advent is a season of expectancy, and hope, but also one of poverty. The poverty is the fact of Stephen Lawrence's death in one of the richest cities in the world; the poverty is the tiny number of minority ethnic Anglicans called to be ordained in the Church of England in the last decade; the poverty is in the failure in implementation of the stop and search policy of the Metropolitan Police in London, which has alienated so many Black and Asian people from the police which should be their protector. Yet there is also the fact

of the future as God's gift: the kingdom which we cannot build but only be open to.

- 67. What we need is the imagination of the Christian hope. The kingdom is not simply the future, but the future as God's possibilities breaking into time, built on the Advent promises. In the demands of Black and Asian Anglicans, in their prayers for a richer life in the Church as the true body of Christ together, we learn that our idols must be broken before the God of justice: we 'look for your reign of justice, mercy and peace'. This report is not simply about justice, though it is that; nor just about social policy, though that is true as well; it is about the integrity of the Church before its God, in judgement and hope. Ultimately it is about a church trying to keep its doors open to all people.

**A REFLECTION ON BLACK IDENTITY AND BELONGING
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH
IN ENGLAND: A WAY FORWARD***

Lorraine Dixon

Introduction

In an essay written for the book *The Postcolonial Bible*,¹ Randall Bailey warns his readers against ignoring their own cultural bias while interpreting biblical texts. This seems an important point not only in relation to biblical studies but also in terms of engaging in theological enterprise. Therefore, I would like to reveal my own cultural bias or the perspective out of which I am writing. I am African Caribbean in heritage and was born in Britain in the 1960s. I was baptized into the Body of Christ in the Church of England. A member all my life, I have been a lay minister and was recently ordained. However, I also grew up within the Black majority church tradition at Bethel Apostolic Church, Leeds. I am basing what I write on my life as a Black person, someone inhabiting a minority experience, in the city of Leeds and in the church. One of my favourite writers Iyanla Vanzant, in her book *The Value in the Valley*² talks about using the valleys of our lives – the sorrows, the low points and the struggles – as times to learn lessons from; as points of value. The reality of racism in Britain has been a harsh valley in many of our stories as black peoples,³ a valley that has continued to shape our lives in terms of neo-colonial experiences in our churches and wider contexts. I have placed myself within a particular time and space because I believe that we have different stories to tell. Yet, in many ways our stories as minority ethnic peoples often meet in shared experiences. So I hope that in some sense, my story may strike a chord of recognition in its readers.

Testimony

I was born and brought up in Leeds, West Yorkshire to parents who were from Jamaica. My parents came from the Caribbean to Britain in the early 1960s. This was because Jamaica, which had been one of the English colonies gave them few economic opportunities, because of the colonialist relationship that

* This essay is adapted from a paper delivered at The Baptist Union Racial Justice Task Group National Event at Harehills Lane Baptist Church, Leeds, on 30 October 1999.

¹ Randall Bailey, 'The Danger of Ignoring One's Cultural Bias in Interpreting the Text', in R.S. Sugirtharajah (ed.), *The Postcolonial Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp.68-90.

² Iyanla Vanzant, *The Value in the Valley: A Black Woman's Guide through Life's Dilemmas* (New York: Fireside, 1996).

³ The term 'Black' is used throughout this essay to refer to African Caribbean people of African heritage from the Caribbean and those born in Britain.

existed between that country (as well as other Caribbean islands) and Britain. Mass unemployment and poverty were the rewards for most of the descendants of those who had come through slavery and its abolition. Difficulties increased after the hurricane of 1944. Moreover, the so called 'mother country' was also calling for her 'Empire children' to come and help build up Britain after the devastation of World War 2. Caribbean peoples were invited to come to do the work that the indigenous people did not want to do, such as working on the buses, in factories, down the mines, or for the NHS. The 'Windrush' testimonies bear witness to the major contribution African Caribbean peoples made to British society in all aspects of its life, culture and wealth.⁴

Growing up in an African Caribbean household in 1970s Britain, I became aware that I inhabited two worlds with their own cultural perspectives. There was the world outside my home in institutions such as Church of England schools I attended, the Anglican Church and the world of work; in which each place I was one of very few Black people. This was a world where White perspectives and ways of existing were viewed as the norm. These perspectives were so 'normal' that they were not even named as 'White' but were used as the standard, the measure of right existence. Then there was the other world, the world of home, the private space where I was free to be myself. This world valued and acknowledged Black cultures and being. I was free to use Jamaican patwah to express myself vocally; free to hear stories about my parents' country, its history and folk tales about Anansi; free to eat tasty food that was seasoned and not bland, my favourite being rice and peas with chicken; free to dance and sing to the liberated strains of Black music. I felt I was free, but the outside world crowded in on this private world and shaped my self-image and my sense of who I was. Those elements of the outside world that were most keenly represented to me and had a great influence on me were school and my local Anglican church.

I was not able to express an alternative identity to a White one at school, without appearing to be odd, peculiar or just strange. One day in an English class, in which I was the only Black child, the teacher asked a question, I put up my hand to answer and did so in patwah. The teacher corrected me in a non-affirming way, the other children laughed at me and I was left with a sense of shame to use my mother dialect in public or White spaces. My language was measured not by the quality of the answer but by how it compared to what was deemed the criterion. I was left in very little doubt as a child that patwah was perceived as a deviance by the white community as represented in the school

⁴ The memories, stories and biographies of African Caribbean peoples who settled in Britain mainly after World War 2. See for example, Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain* (London: Harper Collins, 1998). Also Peter Fryer, *The Politics of Windrush* (London: Index Books, 1999). The name Windrush is derived from the boat SS Empire Windrush which docked at Tilbury in June 1948 with 492 Jamaicans.

and did not measure up to standard English. Other lessons too were problematic especially History and Geography. A form of cultural imperialism operated, with British (especially English) and White upper- and middle-class cultures and history at the epicentre, with other ways of living and being placed in a lesser position. We learned about kings and queens of England and what the upper classes were doing at court or as officers at war. We learned about the middle classes and how they became more influential because of the Industrial Revolution and how they rose to power in the nineteenth century. We even had an enlightened syllabus that enabled us to have a window into the lives of poor White peoples in both the rural and urban areas of Britain. However, I was not taught anything of the history of Black and Asian peoples in this country. As Peter Fryer's seminal book *Staying Power*⁵ reveals in a powerful way, there have been Black peoples in Britain since Roman times and indeed a continuous presence since the sixteenth century. The only occasion Black people were mentioned in class were as Africans who were enslaved and taken over to the so called 'New World' to work on sugar plantations. They were 'victims' who were helped by White people like William Wilberforce because seemingly they could not help themselves. As students of history we learned nothing of the brutality of the slave life or how the Industrial Revolution and many of the institutions of Britain, including the church, were financed by this trade or how Black peoples both on the plantations and in Britain were struggling for slavery's abolition.

My conditioning did not only take place in the classroom; the playground also proved to be just as exacting a teacher. In the predominantly White school I attended, the pop icons on the whole were White. In the 1970s when I was at school these included the Bay City Rollers and the Osmond Brothers, especially Donny Osmond. They were the ones that mainly appeared on the television programme 'Top of the Pops' and various pop magazines. Black artists were marginal to this playground culture, even if they were The Jackson Five. I was never really a fan of any of these pop groups or singers, yet, I felt a need and wanted to fit in, to not appear odd, weird or different. I begged my mother for Bay City Roller socks and wrote in my books that I loved Jimmy Osmond, even though I did not like their music. Still, I wanted to fit in and be part of the White norm, the set standard. I was being conditioned well in this country to deny myself, my identity as a Black person; wishing I was White rather than the Black child I was. As Black people we are often made to feel that our culture, our ways of being are perverse to the White norm. It often takes a long time for someone like myself, a part of the minority ethnic communities in Britain and who was born here, to love themselves as who they are – Black.

⁵ See Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1984)

This same sense of wanting to measure up to White standards, was also present in my church life, growing up in a predominantly White Anglican church. It seemed that in order to fit in, I had to leave anything that gave me a sense of myself as a Black person at the church door and engage with worship that did not value diversity of cultural difference. As I wrote in the introduction to a previous article,⁶ in my home life I was, along with many other young Black people, engaging with 'finding my culture' as a strategy to go beyond self-hatred and to love myself in all my Blackness. Black music (first reggae, then rap in the 1980s), books, discussions with friends, customs, for example, around Caribbean funerals, haircare and cooking, became sites of contestation regarding cultural identity. The Church I belonged to, did not provide a space either in its liturgical or social life for this self discovery. The church expressed its liturgy and music in a particular cultural manner, that is Euro-classical. White people and White men in particular were the church wardens, the sides people, the priest and the servers. Women served on the choir and did the flowers and tea. I could not see myself reflected (as a Black person or a woman) in the worship life or in positions of authority.

However, I have remained within the church because there was something I valued about Anglicanism. Nevertheless, I would often go to church as a child (with its formal hymnody) and traditional mass setting accompanied by the obligatory organ), then run home, where I would listen to the rhythmic sounds of Black music, including 'Blue beat', reggae, rhythm and blues, gospel and rap. In the music, especially Mahalia Jackson's songs, I found an antidote to the rigid worship I had just endured. Through the songs I gained the sense of freedom, spontaneity and spirit that I felt was missing from my worship life. Over the years music has been a source of spiritual refuge. My love of the music illustrated the depth of influence of diasporal elements within my identity formation in Britain. African American and African Caribbean cultural expression, for instance, have provided a vocabulary for many Black people to speak about the nature of Blackness in the British context; giving them a sense of self and belonging in a context that was often hostile or just made them invisible.

I have always remained loyal to the Anglican church despite its institutionalized and personal racism because, as I said before, there were things I valued about the church. These included Anglican liturgical style which holds together different elements: colour, symbolism, a thematic rhythm, a time for reflection, a sense of order and drama. I loved the pomp and ceremony of the more Catholic end of the Anglican church I grew up in; all the bells, bowing and colourful vestments. Dinis Sengulane in his piece entitled 'An African

⁶ Lorraine Dixon ' "Teach it Sister!" Mahalia Jackson as Theologian in Song', *Black Theology in Britain 2* (1999), pp. 72-89

Perspective'⁷ (on Anglican worship), suggests that one of the common reasons that African people choose to become Anglicans is the liturgy. Moreover, Sengulane explores how the liturgical calendar with its changing seasons and colours resonates with the experiences of creation oriented African spirituality. This sense of the Christian year with low points and high points, with sadness and joy resonated with me also. Catholic doctrines of the church such as a reverence for the Creator God and creation spoke to me in a deep way of a Christian understanding of the doctrines of creation, incarnation and redemption. God expressed Godself as creator and in Christ came to meet with us our diverse humanity. The sense of encountering God in his word, scripture, sacrament especially in the Eucharist, creation and in one another was brought alive in the liturgy. These perspectives are what I still value about the Anglican church.

However, this same Anglican style can become an elitist straitjacket that subjugates other identities. A Channel 5 Sunday morning programme 'The Mission', which was aired on 16 November 1997 expresses this. The programme was set at St Martin's-in-the-Fields Church of England, London. The presenter had gone along to the church's patronal festival that included a number of events over a day. One event was a lunchtime concert featuring a 'Black' gospel choir from St Martin's church school. They sang such classics as 'O happy day' with great exuberance and freedom. The music rang around the echoing church and their voices were cherubic. I was intrigued as the programme continued with an older White woman shown walking out of the concert early saying 'That music shouldn't be in church'. This was all the more incredible as this music was not only explicitly religious but also called 'Gospel'. The patronal festival was concluded by evensong with robed choir, acolytes and priests in vestments, plus anthems and responsorial music. It was soul music of sorts and extremely beautiful. However, the presenter was at pains to point out that this cathedral type worship was more typical of Anglican worship, in contrast to the gospel concert.⁸ This spoke to me of how Black presence and gifts to the Anglican church can be made to seem bizarre or outlandish in relation to Church of England worship, rather than an integral aspect. This seemed to validate the viewpoint that the Church of England is White, middle-class and Euro-classical in its preferred cultural expression.⁹

⁷ Dinis Sengulane, 'An African Perspective', in K. Stevenson and Bryan Spinks (eds.), *The Identity of Anglican Worship* (London: Mowbray, 1991), pp. 156-61

⁸ 'The Mission' is not the only television programme that has conveyed this image of Anglicanism. Other religious documentaries, services and comedy programmes such as editions of 'Everyman', 'Songs of Praise', 'Vicar of Dibley' and so on continue to do so.

⁹ Movements for renewal and specific youth services are just some of the interesting exceptions within the Anglican church. However, these tend to be White led and middle class, although they may be on the periphery of Church of England liturgical practice.

The question that was formed in my mind at the presenter's comment on Anglican worship and by the television programme in general was 'why is the Anglican church still wedded to White elitist models of liturgical practice?' In a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural church this should no longer be a credible position. Nevertheless, it is still a cherished perception and acted upon in many churches, even in a number of ethnically and culturally diverse churches. Often subtle and not so subtle strategies may be used to exclude Black cultural expression. However, Black spirituality has been a resilient if hidden element within the Church of England. It often surfaces with the customs surrounding African Caribbean funerals. Parish priest John Wilkinson interviewed Black church members to ascertain the marks and features of Black Christianity. He discovered that this tradition is 'a distinctive style of worship ... surviving "in, around and under" White liturgy and church practice ... [I]ts characteristics [are] namely a determination to be free, a longing to encounter the presence of the Spirit of God in an emotional, existential experience ...'¹⁰ These characteristics are manifested in a number of ways, such as a free singing style using spirituals and Sankey hymns among older Black worshippers and gospel music among the young as well as free praying style. The Biblio-centric sermon may be seen as central to worship with an understanding that it should move you, work up the Spirit of God within. Black communities often pull together when a family suffers a bereavement. Help and support are given as the family goes through the grieving process as well as in relation to the preparations for the funeral itself. The Black tradition is thus revealed as deep, rich, multifaceted and varied. Therefore, the odd unenthusiastically sung so-called calypso hymn at mass, does not necessarily constitute true affirmation of Black cultural expression during worship. Rather it becomes symptomatic of a tendency to caricature this spirituality within 'White-led' churches. Instead we should be led to follow the example of Black Anglican priest, the Reverend Eve Pitt. She 'finds it necessary to constantly encourage Black Christians to hold on to their spiritual heritage, whether this is achieved through singing and praying in a particular kind of way or by meeting together for the promotion of their collective identity and experiences ...'¹¹ Moreover there appear to be parallel pathways for affirming Black Anglicans in their struggle for visibility within the church's liturgy. One pathway is seemingly endorsed by Pitt's comments and stated by Heather Walton in *A Tree God Planted*. Walton describes the recollections of Methodists about the church in the Caribbean: 'People spoke of taking a much more active part in worship: chanting, singing, encouraging the preacher with their comments'.¹² The same was true of the Anglican church

¹⁰ John Wilkinson, *Church in Black and White* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press; Bonn: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1993), pp. 104-105.

¹¹ Valentina Alexander, 'A Mouse in a Jungle', in Delia Jarrett-Macauley (ed.), *Reconstructing Womanhood, Reconstructing Feminism: Writings on Black Women* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp.85-108 (102).

¹² Heather Walton, *A Tree God Planted: Black People in British Methodism* (London: Ethnic Minorities in Methodism Working Group)

according to the African Caribbeans interviewed by Wilkinson; spontaneity and participation were acknowledged and encouraged. This was not to produce a carbon copy of Black Pentecostal denominations (Anglicanism is valued by its members) but a genuine outworking of Black spirituality per se. The second pathway is the creation of alternative liturgies as a resource for the recognition and affirmation of Black traditions within our churches in England.

Black Identity and the Mainstream Churches

When I worked as a Church Army youth and community worker in areas with a significant Black presence, such as St Paul's, Bristol, many issues came up including those around 'race'. If topics concerning Christianity came up at all, it was usually to the question the viability of the religion for Black people. I heard comments like 'Christianity is a White man's religion' or 'Jesus is a White man'. I found such comments deeply troubling and challenging. It would have been easy to just say 'no that is not true' and dismiss what the young people were saying. Instead, I was led to ponder on these perspectives: including Christianity as racist, and complicit in the oppressive systems of imperialist expansionism and the Atlantic Slave Trade. Yet, I was also led to reflect on Christianity as providing the impetus for various struggles for liberation and the pursuit of freedom.

Black theologian James Cone has explored some of the problems Christianity has to face up to regarding its uneasy relationship with people of colour. Cone asks 'Is there a message from Christ to the countless numbers of blacks whose lives are smothered under white society? ... Must black people be forced to deny their identity in order to embrace the Christian faith?'¹³ These questions reminded me of my experience of so-called 'mainstream' church life both at a local and national level. One witnesses not only the marginalization of people of colour from the structures of power and influence but cultural exclusion in relation to its services, liturgies and musical input. Growing up in the Anglican church in Britain, for instance, I was struck by how Black and Asian people often have to deny aspects of our 'Blackness'. The concept of ethnicity is denied as a lived experience by statements such as 'I don't see you as Black' or 'I don't see colour, I just see people' or 'There is no Jew or Greek, we're all one in the Lord'. However this notion of colour blindness is put forward, the result is the same: 'I am not seen!' This process occurs within a context that suggests that minority ethnic peoples are inferior and represses their participation and visibility. Robert Beckford, in an essay entitled 'Towards Post-Colonial, Post-Modern, Black Churches in Britain', speaks of the haemorrhage of young people from the Black majority churches (UK) to both Orthodox Islam and the Nation of Islam. He posits that this is due in part to the internalization of white

¹³ James Cone quoted by Mark Chapman, *Christianity on Trial: African-American Religious Thought before and after Black Power* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), p.1

supremacist thought 'in some aspects of black church life in Britain'.¹⁴ In other words it could be said that in this institution also, Blackness may be denied. Beckford continues '[f]or example, we represent Jesus in icons at home and at church as a European Gentleman with blue eyes and blonde hair ... Similarly, we use a colour symbolism in our theology which makes whiteness the colour of purity and all things dark the colour of sin and destruction'.¹⁵ Furthermore he states that '[i]t is no longer a surprise ... that Islam, with its strong emphasis on ethnic identity and militant politics, is converting 25 black men under 30 every week in England alone'.¹⁶ In like manner many young people of colour (such as those quoted above) connected in some way to 'mainstream' churches like the Anglican church, are concerned with issues of ethnicity and politics and how these impact on matters of faith. We need to address this need, so that they and we can be truly ourselves before God as Black peoples.

There have been various politico-cultural movements present within the African diaspora, ever since those enslaved arrived in the Caribbean to be dispatched to other parts of the Americas. These movements have sought to help diasporal Africans to awaken to their identity, heritage and history. One of the most significant was Pan-Africanism, a mainly British political movement consisting of Africans and people of African descent. Its principal ideas concerned 'racial solidarity and self awareness; Africa for Africans; opposition to racial discrimination; emancipation from white supremacy and domination ...'.¹⁷ The movement's influence went beyond British shores into African Caribbean, African American and African consciousness. It formed part of the backbone that led to the independence movements on the African continent. Another movement that has sought to encourage those who have to face the dehumanization of cultural and racial imperialism was the Garvey movement. The eponymous Garvey was the Honourable Marcus Mosiah Garvey (1887 – 1940). His ideas were similar to those of the Pan Africanists in terms of turning his heart and mind to Africa. He founded a 'Back to Africa' movement – the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League. Its express purpose was the unity of Africans worldwide and the establishment of Africa for Africans. He became a prophet of Black liberation not only in the United States and Britain too. He was inspired by a deep faith in a liberator God and the Christ who brings freedom. Garvey's faith coloured his understanding of Black humanity as part of God's creation and thus good. Inequality and discrimination against Black people was an affront to

¹⁴ Robert Beckford, 'Towards Post-Colonial, Post-Modern, Black Churches in Britain', in *The Report of the Proceedings of the Consultation between the WCC and African and African-Caribbean Church Leaders in Britain at the New Testament Church of God, Leeds, England, 30 Nov – 2 Dec 1995* (WCC, undated), pp.43-48 (44).

¹⁵ Beckford, 'Towards Post-Colonial, Post-Modern, Black Churches in Britain', p.44

¹⁶ Beckford, 'Towards Post-Colonial, Post-Modern, Black Churches in Britain', p.45

¹⁷ Fryer, *Staying Power*, p. 272

God. Other African identified movements have included for African Caribbean British youths especially, Rastafarianism and recently the adoption of both Islam (perceived as non-racist) and The Nation of Islam (a Black led organization). What all these movements have in common is a serious attitude to Black identity and its importance in relation to spiritual and psychological liberation. It is seen as central to claiming one's humanity in a context that negates that by racism and other forms of oppression. It is about claiming who we are before Creator God and stating 'I am somebody!' The task that these movements have set for us is to continue to engage in 'centering the black experience, which is part of our task of fighting racism and asserting our humanity in a society that says we are somewhat less than human'.¹⁸ We need to listen to, learn from and develop these voices for our use as Black Christians.¹⁹ Perhaps young Black people, like those I referred to earlier, would then see a church that values people of colour and actively struggles against racism within and without its organization.

Finding one's place as a person of colour in one of the mainstream churches in Britain can be a difficult process. The structures that continue to make us invisible in our own churches are the result of history and White supremacist practices that promote Black inferiority. It is against this sort of background that minority ethnic communities in Britain (e.g. the African Caribbean communities), have to struggle for identity, self-confidence and self-esteem. One of the major resources has been the notion that our histories as African and African Caribbean peoples are a liberating resource. They have acted as a counterbalance to Eurocentric hegemonic histories that have written Black presence out of the scheme of world events or dehumanized people of colour by a distorting and demeaning discourse. There is a need for us to discover our place in time and space in our churches, as Black involvement in church history is generally not known or celebrated. Some of the most significant early Church leaders and theologians were Africans: people such as Anthony, Perpetua and her Carthage companions, Athanasius, Augustine, Cyprian, Origen and Tertullian. Some of their names appear on the churches' calendar, while for others their theological teaching and insight still carry weight. However, nothing is really made of their African heritage. The discussion usually centres on their appropriation of Graeco-Roman concepts. Nevertheless, there is something liberating in discovering the multi-cultural nature of the early church and the significant part that Africans have played in Christianity, not only in

¹⁸ Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, 'We have a Beautiful Mother: Womanist Musings on the Afrocentric Idea' in Cheryl Sanders (ed.), *Living the Intersection: Womanist and Afrocentism in Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press), 1995, pp. 21-42 (35)

¹⁹ Black and Womanist Theologians are beginning to engage with these politico-cultural movements. See for example Cheryl Sanders (ed.), *Living the Intersection*; Robert Beckford, *Jesus is Dread: Black Theology and Black Culture in Britain* (London: Dartman, Longman & Todd, 1998); Josiah Ulysses Young, III, *A Pan-African Theology: Providence and the Legacies of the Ancestors* (New Jersey: Africa world Press Inc., 1992).

North African but Nubia and the ancient Orthodox Church of Ethiopia too. It could be said that Christianity went out to the rest of the world through Africa. However, as the religion went North it was gradually de-Africanized and its links with African spirituality forgotten.

Looking to the past does not just mean looking to continental Africa. Part of that looking back means appropriating those liberative and instructing stories from our diasporal histories such as in the Caribbean. It means we can hear stories relating how our enslaved African ancestors, although fed a corrupt form of Christianity, would critique it. The slave masters would pay white ministers to see to the religious instruction of the slaves. These ministers used a highly selective form of Christianity to protect the economic interests of the slave holders and to bolster up the status quo. They preached favoured messages from Pauline letters (e.g. Eph. 5.6) and other portions of Scripture, to encourage the slave men, women and children, to accept their lot and to be good and obedient workers! However, the Black Christians never truly accepted this narrative but found an alternative one in the Bible stories. This was a narrative proclaiming that slavery was not the will of God but that all people were created equal. These Africans in exile did not passively accept Christianity but transformed the religion. The revolutionary aspects of the Exodus narratives, the prophets and the person of Jesus Christ were brought to the fore. Through these stories and their interpretation by the Black preacher, the slaves were able to perceive a message of hope, justice and Black liberation. The Holy Spirit of Jesus was seen as the agent of this liberation. Black leaders, like Sam 'Daddy' Sharpe and, in the post-slavery period, Paul Bogle (who were often Baptists or Methodists), inspired by this spirit engaged in struggles for freedom and justice.²⁰ These stories should stand alongside those of William Wilberforce and Grenville Sharp who have long been acknowledged as important to the anti-slavery struggle. Another part of this particular diasporal historical project would have to be re-discovering the names of Black women, who seized by the Spirit of God, were led to lead slave revolts; or who engaged in other forms of resistance both direct and indirect. Women who could be said to be the Christian 'sistren' of Nanny, the Maroon queen of Jamaica, who saw off the English and claimed freedom for herself, her Maroon fighters and parts of the island. This historical perspective could act as a counterbalance to what has seemingly been quite a one-sided history.

Other areas of our church life have the potential to be transformed, such as how we study the Bible, not just our history as a multi-cultured and multi-ethnic church. Like our spiritual brother Simon of Cyrene, we as Black people have had to bear a powerful cross, especially in our churches. Yet, our faith and the

²⁰ I am left to wonder whether Black Anglicans had such radical ancestors in the Caribbean or is our history a story of passivity and capitulation to the status quo?

Bible continue to exercise a strong influence in our lives as Black Christians because of the message of hope, justice and transformation in the person of Jesus Christ. Charles Copher, one of the first African Americans to receive a PhD in Hebrew Bible, was engaging in Black biblical studies around the same time that James Cone was beginning to wrestle with Black theology; the middle to late 1960s. Copher has done extensive work on Black African presence in the Bible, including Egypt, Cush and Ethiopia. This presence is a diverse one

[f]rom slaves to rulers, from court officials to authors who wrote parts of the Old Testament itself, from lawgivers to prophets, black peoples and their lands and individual black persons appear numerous times. In the veins of Hebrew-Israelite-Judahite-Jewish peoples flowed black blood.²¹

Randolph Bailey, one of the new generation of Black academics, refers to himself as an Afrocentric Hebrew Bible scholar. His work reveals that viewpoint with essays on the de-Africanization of Moses, African presence in Old Testament poetry and narratives.²² Renita Weems in her books *Just a Sister Away* and *Battered Love*²³ uses the lens of Womanist scholarship to 'read' Scripture in the context of African American women's lives. A common theme that runs through these scholars' work is biblical study done from a Black liberation perspective. This is to provide a meaningful resource for the communities where they minister. This is in order for peoples from marginalized groups reading Scripture to begin to 'read' the text with their own voices. Renita Weems states that despite its use as an instrument of oppression, 'African American women have continued to read the Bible in most instances because of its vision and promise of a world where the humanity of everyone will be valued'.²⁴ Black or Afrocentric biblical studies is about enabling people to continue to 'read' Scripture in a way that is liberative. It is also about inclusion; the inclusion of people of colour who have been and are denied their humanity. It is also about including ourselves in the story of faith, we are part of the story too, although we are often coloured or written out. This is not a tool to oppress White folks or to substitute Black with White, but a strategy to include the contribution of Black people in the church and its faith story. We

²¹ Charles Copher, 'The Black Presence in the Old Testament', in Cain Hope Felder (ed.), *Stony the Road we Trod: African-American Biblical Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) pp. 146-64 (164).

²² See Randolph Bailey's essays, 'Is That Any Name for a Nice Hebrew boy?: Exodus 2:1-10. The de-Africanization of an Israelite hero', in R. Bailey and J. Grant (eds.), *The Recovery of Black Presence: An Interdisciplinary Exploration* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), pp. 25-36 and 'Beyond Identification: The Use of Africans in OT Poetry and Narratives', in Felder (ed.), *Stony the Road we Trod*, pp. 165-84

²³ Renita Weems, *Just a Sister Away: A Womanist Vision of Women's Relationships in the Bible* (San Diego, CA: LuraMedia, 1988); *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).

²⁴ Renita Weems, 'Reading her Way through the Struggle: African American Women and the Bible', in Felder (ed.), *The Stony Road we Trod*, pp.57-77 (77).

need to work hard at countering the exclusionary forces that have kept Black people invisible or marginalized in our churches.

Belonging: A Way Forward

What does it mean to belong to a mainstream church if you are Black? For many of us that minority existence has been a painful one of discovering that racism is a limiting reality in our churches. In Eph. 4.25 we find the following words: 'Then have done with falsehood and speak the truth to each other, for we belong to one another as parts of one body'. I take from this portion of Ephesians the idea of 'Speaking the truth' and I would like to add 'And dropping the mask'. (So, 'Speaking the truth and dropping the mask'.) These words jumped off the pages of Scripture because they seem to highlight the falsehood we live under in our churches; we often do not speak the truth about racism. Many white people deny its reality – demanding that Black and Asian people spill their guts and tell stories, but even then they may not be believed; there is always a more compelling and comfortable counter argument or excuse. Some Black and Asian people too are in denial about racism. Often saying it does not exist, in order that they do not become uncomfortable or out of fear so that they do not rock the boat or yet because they want to fit into the structure. However, as many people can testify from lived experience, racism is an ever present evil that affects the lives of Black and Asian people, denying them access to equal opportunities and a level playing field not only in society in general but also our White majority churches in particular. We need to speak the truth and drop the mask and wake up from denial to acknowledge the reality of racism in our 'White led' churches.

However, as Black people we should set ourselves the task of looking at this issue of belonging as something positive and a way to move forward. Racism is an appeal to maintaining the status quo, maintaining a form of colonialism, to hold us back as a people. So then, what does it mean to be: a Black Anglican? A Black Baptist? A Black Methodist? A Black Catholic? and so on; to gain a sense of belonging in a predominantly White mainstream church setting. I think we need to start telling our stories, we need to give testimony – we need to revisit our own stories, our own past as individual Black people and see how there resonate with or diverge from other Black stories. We also need to visit, perhaps for the first time, our stories as Black church in the Baptist Union, Church of England, Roman Catholic, Methodist or United Reformed Church. In her essay 'Testimony as Embodiment: Telling the Truth and Shaming the Devil', Michele Jacques, an African American theologian, states that '[e]ntering into and telling the "truths" of one's own story invites not only a communal self-revelatory experience, but a potentially transformative one. This is the joy,

fear, challenge and reward of giving one's testimony.'²⁵ We need to place ourselves in the history and 'herstory' of our churches.²⁶ We are written out because we are perceived not to matter or have significance, we have not taken or been given power. We need to reclaim our stories, our inheritance, our place in time and space, ultimately our healing. We have chosen to remain in these churches, many of us feel called by God to remain, to be an irritant. Perhaps by our very presence we might shake the complacency or the inevitability of 'White-ism' as Malcolm X called it, in our churches. We belong in our churches. We have a right to be in them and no matter what, we remain. Perseverance and faithfulness are indeed valued traits of the Christian's walk in the Spirit.

We need to come to voice about what it means to be Black and Christian. It is okay that we are a diverse people as Church. If it was not okay, why did Creator God create glorious variety? Diversity is not a threat to unity, we do not have to be uniform, hiding who we are when we go to church, ashamed. Sharing the treasures of our identity – our folklore and tales, our food, our customs, our understanding of God – can and should be a gift to our churches. What underpins this enterprise is the business of taking the incarnation seriously. God came amongst us in Jesus at a particular time, in a particular place, in a particular human situation or context. As professor of liturgy, François Kabasele Lumbala states, the 'Jewish Christ interests us only because, instead of making Jews of us all, he has transcended the concrete context of his incarnation to become the Alpha and the Omega of all human history.'²⁷ This is not to denigrate the Jesus of history and his Jewish heritage, but rather emphasizes the need to recontextualize or inculturate the personhood and message of Jesus, so he can become the Christ of faith for peoples of diverse cultures or contexts. We need to revisit our faith story as African Caribbeans; a story of both survival strategies and radical action in the face of hostility and racism in our churches. Daring to dream of a church free from oppression has continued to challenge us to remain in such institutions; a thorn in the side because of our very presence and tenacity. Black Christians in the mainstream traditions have a long history of being engaged in a critique of institutionalized and personal racism within the churches. The sacrament of Black presence has sought to herald a realized vision of freedom, equality and real change for all.

²⁵ Michele Jacques, 'Testimony as Embodiment: Telling the Truth and Shaming the Devil', *Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* (1995), pp. 129-45.

²⁶ I am currently engaged in research that is concerned to begin the task of reclaiming the history of Black people in the Church of England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

²⁷ François Kabasele Lumbala, 'Africans Celebrate Jesus Christ', in Rosino Gibellini (ed.) *Paths of African Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1994) pp. 78-94 (79).

Concluding Thoughts

We have been and are part of the story of faith and part of the stories of our respective churches. Let us commit ourselves to discovering more of our Christian heritage as Black Baptists, Black Anglicans, Black Methodists and so on. For it is in unearthing that heritage that we begin to dispel the myth of our invisibility and claim our rightful place at the table of fellowship. We are not poor wretches who need scraps of sympathy thrown down to us but are full participating members who demand the right to be treated on an equal footing. 'But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream' (Amos 5.24).

(Originally published in *Black Theology in Britain*, A Journal of Contextual Praxis, Issue 4, 2000. Reproduced by permission of Sheffield Academic Press Limited.)

Responding to the Report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry

(Extract from the Archbishops' Council's second report
to the General Synod, November 1999)

1. In July, the Bishop of Stepney gave a presentation to the General Synod on the Report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and called on the Church both to play a part in implementing its recommendations and to 'put our own house in order'. Replying on behalf of the Council, Dr Philip Giddings promised that the Council, *'building and extending the work that is already in train, will draw together an action plan which co-ordinates and prioritises what has to be done.'*
2. This note describes some initiatives in hand and the first stage of an action plan to respond to those challenges. It has been prepared by a group of staff in the Church and World division which has taken this work forward, sharing the emerging plan with the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglicans Concerns (CMEAC) and the Community and Urban Affairs Committee of the Board for Social Responsibility. In presenting it, the Council acknowledges that the Church, like other institutions in our society, must accept the challenge of institutional racism and repent.
3. When Bishop John addressed the Council and the House of Bishops last summer, he tabled a 'Draft Agenda for Action for the Church of England'. This contained wide-ranging proposals, many focusing on what the Church could do locally to assist in the implementation of the Inquiry's recommendations. The follow-up to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry is a huge agenda which will require a very considerable commitment from the Church at all levels and over a sustained period if it is to be delivered. That of itself will require a 'step change' in the Church's own self-understanding and its attitude towards racism and the place of minority ethnic members in its life and development. The issues are critical not only as a question of justice but also for the growth and development of the Church's life. We believe an early priority is to help achieve that 'step change'.
4. In preparing this plan, much has been learned from the approach of the Metropolitan Police about the value of experiential learning to generate a powerful recognition of the persistence of racism (conscious and unconscious) and a commitment to change; and the importance of

measurable targets if changes are to 'bite' operationally. We believe that the Church and the Police have much to learn from each other.

5. We believe that the first stage of the follow-up action at national level should have the following elements:

(a) **Initiatives to help implement the recommendations of the Inquiry's Report with reference to the Police etc.**

Pilot work is already under way with some London churches in third party reporting of racist crimes; the BSR has been working with the Racial and Violent Crimes Task Force on aspects of the follow-up to the Inquiry's Report; proposals for bolstering police chaplaincy arrangements are out for consultation with regional Bishops' groups; staff have joined in the work of the Churches' Commission for Racial Justice in building relationships between Black majority churches and the police; various local initiatives are happening to strengthen relations between the police and Black communities.

(b) **Educational initiatives and resources to help schools and church groups address and embrace cultural diversity.**

CMEAC's reports and material designed for parish use provide a valuable resource; work will be undertaken to assess whether there are any gaps or weaknesses; stage one of a research project commissioned by CMEAC and the Board of Education (*Valuing Cultural Diversity in Rural Primary Schools*) has recently been completed and its recommendations for follow-up are being assessed.

(c) **A statistical exercise to gather figures from (say) six dioceses to determine how minority ethnic people are represented in the life of the Church – so that we can see what has changed since *How We Stand* (1994); and so that we have a secure statistical base from which to set future targets and objectives.**

The most recent statistics for minority ethnic participation in the life of the Church were collected in 1993 and published in *How We Stand* in 1994. We intend to undertake a sampling exercise based on some of the dioceses with the highest concentrations of minority ethnic people, with two other dioceses with lower concentrations. The statistics would cover church attendance; membership of Electoral Rolls, PCCs, Deanery and Diocesan Synods; vocations; all forms of accredited ministry; demographic statistics

about the proportion of minority ethnic communities in local populations would be assembled to provide a context.

(d) **Listening to minority ethnic people both through existing networks and recent surveys and through focus groups to hear what they are saying and feeling about the Church and what they wish to see changed.**

Recent surveys include a research project which CMEAC has sponsored among young minority ethnic Anglicans; a Vocations Conference; a number of networks which can be 'plugged in' to this exercise; we also intend to explore means (such as focus groups) of listening to the views of those who might otherwise be excluded.

(e) **A commitment – starting with the Archbishops' Council – to experiential learning about racism to engender a new sense of shared understanding and urgency.**

We intend as a Council to undertake experiential learning as a shared experience to focus commitment and future plans and as an example for the Church generally.

6. We have received a number of helpful suggestions from CMEAC and the Committee for Urban and Community Affairs about the experience and resources of other Churches and related bodies; training; equipping minority ethnic members for new roles; the need to focus on the whole community (including those of other faiths); and resourcing issues. We will follow these up (along with other views) as the work proceeds.

7. This plan is not comprehensive: it indicates the first steps. More work will be needed on several areas and we will be developing that work in the months ahead. We believe it is essential to proceed in a way which builds up momentum and provides the Church with a reliable basis against which to measure future progress.

STATISTICS

Methodology

The completed questionnaires were collected by the dioceses and passed to the Statistics Unit. All forms received by the 25 September 2000 were processed. The response rates varied from one reply for every three parishes at the lower end to replies from just over one reply per parish (from different churches) at the upper end. For the six dioceses where the response rates were less than two-thirds it is difficult to draw reliable conclusions, as the proportion of each diocese that has to be estimated is relatively high and it is not known whether the replies are representative of the whole diocese. This is particularly true where the response rate is under a half. As the survey only covered nine dioceses, which are not representative of the whole country, it is not possible to make inferences about the whole of the Church.

Reminder of *How We Stand*

In May 1992 the Statistics Unit of the Central Board of Finance was approached by the Committee on Black Anglican Concerns for advice on the setting up of a survey to 'find out the number of Black Anglicans, and the extent of their participation in the life of the Church of England'. A questionnaire was drafted and circulated to all parishes in all dioceses with a request for completion by 31 May 1993. Analysis of the forms was carried out during the first six months of 1994 and then reported in *How We Stand* in the summer of 1994.

It was estimated that approximately 60% of parishes responded in 1994. However the response rates for individual dioceses were very varied. For dioceses where the response rates were low in either of the surveys it is very difficult to compare the results over time with any certainty as different parishes may have responded on each occasion. As the recent survey did not cover the whole country it is not possible to tell reliably whether the national results for 1994 are still true.

Table 1: Estimates of the population by Ethnic Group and Area of Residence, 1998, Great Britain

Government Office Regions	Total Population, thousands	Minority Ethnic Population, thousands	Percentage of population from a Minority Ethnic Background	Percentage of the total population of England that live in each region	Percentage of the minority ethnic population of England that live in each region
North East	2,582	49	2%	5%	1%
North West and Merseyside	6,857	290	4%	14%	8%
Greater Manchester Metropolitan County	2,573	182	7%	5%	5%
Yorkshire and Humberside	5,012	257	5%	10%	7%
West Yorkshire Metropolitan County	2,102	202	10%	4%	6%
East Midlands	4,152	172	4%	9%	5%
West Midlands	5,282	524	10%	11%	15%
West Midlands Metropolitan County	2,594	460	18%	5%	13%
Eastern	5,289	185	3%	11%	5%
London	6,982	1,758	25%	14%	50%
Inner London	2,682	807	30%	5%	23%
Outer London	4,299	950	22%	9%	27%
South East	7,786	252	3%	16%	7%
South West	4,822	56	1%	10%	2%
England	48,765	3,543	7%	100%	100%

Source: Office for National Statistics. Copyright National Statistics 2000.

It may also be relevant to note that a Department of the Environment report published in 1996 based on data from the 1991 Census stated that 'different ethnic minority groups have very different distributions across Britain:

Black groups are concentrated mainly in the Greater London area; people describing themselves as Indian are concentrated in metropolitan southern England, the Home Counties and in the more affluent parts of West London; the majority of people describing themselves as of Pakistani origin live in the metropolitan areas of West and South Yorkshire, the North West and the West Midlands regions; people describing themselves as of Bangladeshi origin are concentrated particularly in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets; the Chinese, Other Asian and 'Other Other' groups are concentrated in London, although the former is also spread quite evenly across the rest of the country.'

(Source: Urban Trends in England: Latest Evidence from the 1991 Census, Crown Copyright 1996.)

Table 2: Analysis of data by reported percentage of total parish population from a minority ethnic background

Percentage of the total population from a minority ethnic background	Number of Forms received and input	Children and Young People under 16 years old		Adults attending services on a normal Sunday		Church Electoral Rolls		Clergy	
		Number who regularly attend church	Number (and percentage) from a minority ethnic background	Average number attending services on a normal Sunday	Number (and percentage) from a minority ethnic background	Number on church electoral rolls	Number (and percentage) from a minority ethnic background	Number of clergy	Number (and percentage) from a minority ethnic background
Under 5% *	1,480	30,220	890 (3%)	97,720	1,370 (1%)	177,000	1,020 (1%)	1,938	25 (1%)
5% to 9%	106	3,550	460 (13%)	11,240	680 (6%)	20,450	700 (3%)	168	9 (5%)
10% to 24%	174	5,480	1,400 (26%)	16,080	2,580 (16%)	24,690	3,020 (12%)	312	21 (7%)
25% to 50%	125	4,020	2,000 (50%)	9,320	3,780 (41%)	14,920	4,930 (33%)	192	16 (8%)
Over 50%**	37	970	640 (66%)	2,750	1,480 (54%)	4,150	2,080 (50%)	60	7 (12%)

Percentage of the total population from a minority ethnic background	Number of Forms received and input	Readers		Churchwardens		PCC members		Deanery Synod Members	
		Number of readers	Number (and percentage) from a minority ethnic background	Number of Churchwardens	Number (and percentage) from a minority ethnic background	Number of PCC members	Number (and percentage) from a minority ethnic background	Number of deanery synod members	Number (and percentage) from a minority ethnic background
Under 5% *	1,480	1,525	6 (0%)	3,320	30 (1%)	22,170	80 (0%)	3,830	10 (0%)
5% to 9%	106	143	5 (3%)	230	10 (4%)	1,600	60 (4%)	350	10 (3%)
10% to 24%	174	262	24 (9%)	370	50 (14%)	2,660	300 (11%)	520	50 (10%)
25% to 50%	125	118	26 (22%)	290	110 (38%)	1,900	540 (29%)	340	80 (24%)
Over 50%**	37	59	11 (19%)	90	40 (40%)	530	220 (42%)	100	30 (33%)

Percentage of the total population from a minority ethnic background	Number of Forms received and input	Eucharist Assistants		Sidespeople		Group Leaders	
		Number Eucharist Assistants	Number (and percentage) from a minority ethnic background	Number of sidespeople	Number (and percentage) from a minority ethnic background	Number of group leaders	Number (and percentage) from a minority ethnic background
Under 5% *	1,480	5,540	30 (1%)	20,500	100 (0%)	9,190	60 (1%)
5% to 9%	106	760	40 (5%)	2,010	110 (5%)	1,500	70 (4%)
10% to 24%	174	1,210	190 (16%)	2,910	440 (15%)	1,560	180 (11%)
25% to 50%	125	710	240 (35%)	1,790	650 (36%)	1,130	280 (25%)
Over 50%**	37	200	80 (42%)	460	230 (50%)	230	110 (48%)

Notes: Only forms that answered the question about the percentage of minority ethnic Anglicans are included in the above table. Under 5%* includes those that replied 'None'. With the exception of clergy and Reader numbers all numbers have been rounded to the nearest ten. All percentages were calculated before numbers were rounded and are shown to the nearest whole percentage. As only a small number of replies were received in the Over 50%** category inferences should not be made from these data about other parishes.

Table 3 : Comparison with the main findings of *How We Stand*

<i>How We Stand</i>	2000 survey
One third of parishes that responded had some minority ethnic participation	The proportion ranged from almost all replies in London and Southwark to a fifth of replies in Exeter and York. For the nine dioceses just under a half of parishes that replied had some minority ethnic participation. To compare fairly with 1994 an analysis would need to be made that considered just those parishes which took part in both surveys.
Every diocese had some minority ethnic worshippers	All nine dioceses in the survey had some minority ethnic worshippers
London, Southwark and Birmingham dioceses accounted for the majority of the minority ethnic participation	Responses from London and Southwark dioceses accounted for three-quarters of the minority ethnic Anglican adult church attendees recorded by the survey.
There was a tendency for minority ethnic Anglicans to be more commonly found in parishes where the population was larger	For the nine dioceses there was a tendency for minority ethnic Anglicans to be more commonly found in parishes where the population was larger
Adult minority ethnic Anglican membership of the Church seemed to be between 0.9% and 1.4% of the electoral roll of the Church and between 1.5% and 2.4% of the usual Sunday attendance	As the dioceses that were in the survey were not representative of the whole country it is not possible to recalculate these totals for the whole Church. Initial analysis for those dioceses with good response rates in both surveys suggests broadly similar levels of participation to those estimated in 1994.
The number of adult minority ethnic Anglicans on the electoral rolls was 5% lower than the number attending church on a normal Sunday (whereas the total electoral roll was 60% higher than the total attendance on a normal Sunday)	In the nine dioceses the number of adult minority ethnic Anglicans on the electoral rolls was approximately 20% higher than the number attending church on a normal Sunday (and the total electoral roll was 75% higher than the total attendance on a normal Sunday).
The number of children in regular attendance was closer to the number of adults in regular attendance amongst minority ethnic Anglicans	In the nine dioceses the number of children in regular attendance was closer to the number of adults in regular attendance amongst minority ethnic Anglicans
Black Independent Churches are shown to be more commonly found in areas where the minority ethnic Anglican membership was higher	In the replies received the average number of minority ethnic Anglican adults attending Church on a normal Sunday was higher in those parishes with more Black Independent Churches.
Generally in dioceses where there were more minority ethnic Anglicans, there were more holding positions of responsibility	Of the nine dioceses those with more minority ethnic Anglicans had more minority ethnic Anglicans holding positions of responsibility
There was evidence that minority ethnic Anglican membership was under-represented at certain levels of Church government	In each of the nine dioceses the percentage of Deanery Synod members from a minority ethnic background was lower than the percentage of adults attending Church on a normal Sunday who were from a minority ethnic background
The distribution of minority ethnic Anglican membership in a diocese tended to be uneven.	In each diocese the percentage of adults attending Church on a normal Sunday who are from a minority ethnic background varied from parish to parish showing an uneven distribution across each diocese .

Comparison of Estimates

In *How We Stand* various estimates of the percentage of adult attendees and electoral roll members from a minority ethnic background were given. For the whole of the church estimates of between 0.9% and 1.4% of the electoral roll and between 1.5% and 2.4% of the adult usual Sunday attendance. For the four dioceses with higher response rates the table below shows the equivalent

diocesan estimates as printed in *How We Stand* and estimates calculated on the same basis using the data collected in 2000. In general terms: the lower estimates assume that all minority ethnic attendees and electoral roll members are included in the replies i.e. that parishes that did not return the questionnaire do not have any minority ethnic Anglicans; and the higher estimates assume that the replies are fully representative of each diocese i.e. that the parishes that did not return their forms have the same percentage of minority ethnic Anglicans as the parishes which did return their forms.

Table 4: Comparison of estimates from *How We Stand* with estimates from 2000 data

Diocese	Response rate		Adult Attendance: estimate of percentage who are minority ethnic Anglicans		Church Electoral Rolls: estimate of ER members who are minority ethnic Anglicans	
	1994	2000	1994	2000	1994	2000
Blackburn	79%	65%	0.4% - 0.8%	0.6% - 0.9%	0.1% - 0.5%	0.2% - 0.3%
Lichfield	96%	98%	1.5% - 3.7%	1.8% - 2.3%	0.8% - 3.5%	1.0% - 1.2%
Liverpool	98%	104%	0.7% - 1.5%	2.0% - 2.6%	0.4% - 1.2%	0.5% - 0.6%
Southwark	79%	76%	10.0% - 23.3%	14.7% - 19.4%	7.2% - 27.0%	11.0% - 14.2%