

MINORITY ETHNIC
ANGLICAN CONCERNS



serving God in Church and community

Vocations for Minority Ethnic Anglicans in
the Church of England



J 13648

**Serving God in Church
and Community**

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Foreword

We are delighted to commend this report *Serving God in Church and Community* for your considered reflection and action. These two vocations conferences represent a positive commitment by the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns.

It was an exercise well worth doing on behalf of us all, and for which we are grateful. It is our hope that bishops, diocesan directors of ordinands and clergy in the parishes will study it carefully and consider what action is appropriate on the relevant recommendations contained in this report.

May we move ever closer to that most excellent fellowship in the body of Christ where every gift and talent is valued and affirmed in the ministry of Christ's Church to our world.

✠ George Cantuar

✠ David Ebor

Preface

*My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, who are called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ*

We are all called to serve in different ways, and discerning God's plan for us can sometimes take time.

We in the minority ethnic communities have particular gifts, insights and special contributions we can offer in service to our brothers and sisters and to God. Let us take courage and strength from each other's stories and hopes, so that God will be magnified through the diversity with which he blesses us. Let us all make the difference. Harambee!

For all that has been – THANKS

For all that shall be – YES

With deep bonds of affection,

The Right Revd Dr John Sentamu
Bishop of Stepney
Chairman of the Committee for
Minority Ethnic Concerns
(CMEAC) 1991–9

Abstract from Bishop John's message to participants at Whirlow Grange.

The full text is presented in Appendix 2 (p. 39).

Acknowledgements

1

The Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC) is extremely grateful to the Archbishops for the Foreword, and to the Bishops for their messages of encouragement, support and inspiration. CMEAC would also like to express sincere appreciation to the presenters and facilitators for their contributions at the vocations conferences; the participants, without whom the conferences would not have been possible; the Ministry division, for their support and the members of the Planning Group, namely:

Revd Charles Lawrence

Ms Josile Munro

Miss Anne-Marie Parker

Ms Smitha Prasadani

Mrs Glynne Gordon-Carter (CMEAC Secretary).

Thanks are also due to Miss Gillian Bloor, who typed the report.

Note on the text

Quotations by Cardinal Newman (pp. 5, 9) are taken from Eithne M. O'Sharkey, compiler, *Prayers from the writings of John Henry (Cardinal) Newman*, Irish Messenger Publications, Dublin, 1979.

The importance of vocations conferences for minority ethnic Anglicans

The Revd Charles Lawrence,
Chairman of the Vocations Sub-committee of CMEAC

The Church of England is regarded as the Mother Church of a vast network of churches throughout the world. As we know, the characteristics of Christians globally are that they are under 25, poor and black. However, the English experience is the exact opposite: the Church is mainly middle-aged, middle-class and white. The presence of minority ethnic Christians, and particularly Anglicans, provides an important corrective to our experience here, a wonderful opportunity for growth and a new experience of Christian living.

Although the minority ethnic Christians who have come to our vocations conferences have not all been under 25, they are enormously gifted people, many of them professionally qualified. By in some cases ignoring, and in all cases failing to maximize, the potential of these people and their gifts, the Church is not only failing to witness to its true nature as the body of Christ but is also starving itself of God-given nourishment.

Section VI of the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns' Terms of Reference approved by the Standing Committee of the General Synod in January 1996 reads: 'Seeking the development and empowerment of minority ethnic Anglicans, and in particular fostering and encouraging vocations within the Church.'

CMEAC established a vocations sub-committee in June 1997, part of whose work with the Youth Issues group has been to organize and promote vocations conferences at Whirlow Grange, Sheffield, in 1998 and 1999.

The planning group received a great deal of support and encouragement from the Ministry Division. In 1998, Archdeacon Gordon Kuhrt and Mrs Margaret Sentamu, and in 1999 the Revd Mark Sowerby and Mrs Sentamu, made substantial contributions to the conferences.

The second vocations conference was held over the Pentecost weekend in 1999. In discussing the future of this work, the planning group felt that another conference should not be held in 2000, as the conferences were supposed to be a pump-priming exercise to encourage the dioceses to value and endorse dedicated Christian living amongst minority ethnic Anglicans and to promote their particular vocations. Although this pro-active work is undoubtedly happening in some of the dioceses and we are delighted and encouraged by this, the evidence of both years' conferences shows that there is still a long way to go. Some who attended in 1999 had previously been in contact with their diocesan director of ordinands (DDO) but heard about the conference indirectly and received no information through the diocesan and parochial structures. Again, some of those who came were unsure about attending and arrived feeling unsupported, misunderstood and undervalued by the Church at large. From the very first evening it was clear that these misgivings had been overtaken by a sense of 'coming home' and belonging.

Each participant had been asked to give their testimony. During the weekend they each shared their journey of faith. For the listeners this was a deeply moving and sometimes profoundly harrowing experience.

Those attending in 1998 and 1999 are the tip of a substantial iceberg. They are significantly gifted people who love and serve Jesus and want to offer their not inconsiderable talents for the benefit of the whole Church. In large measure, the two conferences met or exceeded the terms of reference quoted above: vocation in its many forms was explored extensively and first-rate speakers and facilitators, the majority from minority ethnic backgrounds, made themselves available to participants formally and informally, proving valuable role models. People from across the country were brought together, they studied the Scriptures, prayed together, offered worship to God, explored God's calling to them, and

witnessed its effect in the lives of others. All were encouraged to carry on with their sense of calling knowing that they are valued by God and his Church.

Although some 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 often a cultural norm to be self-effacing and modest, incorrectly interpreted as diffidence. 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 vocation.

Some dioceses have taken this work seriously and are promoting it, and we would encourage all dioceses to do the same. People have come wounded, feeling that the Church is ignoring them because they have not heard of the conference directly through diocesan channels. This shows clearly that these conferences are meeting a need not satisfied elsewhere.

It is worth adding that at both conferences participants have sought an assurance from the organizers: 'There will be another one next year, won't there?' In reflecting on our experience over the last two years we are convinced that the Church of England should heed their cry and take up this essential piece of work. The vocations planning group is grateful to the many who have supported and encouraged its work, and remains willing to act as a goad to those for whom minority ethnic vocations are not an item high on their list of priorities.

'Don't send me! I'm not big enough!'

Keynote address by Father John Gribben, CR

When I was a kid I was a great fan of the cinema. I am so old now that I can remember when cinema was really cheap. The Saturday matinee was the equivalent of two pence. The result was that my brothers and I often went to the cinema as much as six times a week and rarely less than three times.

Now that I'm a monk living a life of simplicity, and now that cinema costs a lot more, I am usually limited to twice a year – always once in January round about the time of my birthday. This year the birthday treat was *Enemy of the State* starring Will Smith, a wonderfully talented and attractive actor.

Now I don't know whether you have ever thought of it before, but in the cinema or the theatre or television your angle of vision is that of God. You see the whole story, you know what is going on in the minds of the actors, you know what their destiny will be, you are involved in the plot and you see the thing through to the end. This, I think, is what St John meant when he called God the Alpha and Omega – the A to Z of the story.

As we watch *Enemy of the State* we see what the characters themselves do not see – that Will Smith, innocently involved in a game of political corruption, will be the agent by which the forces of evil will be overthrown and justice will triumph. Almost any film you can think of centres on a character around whom the plot revolves and through whom the story reaches its message and meaning. I chose Will Smith because his was the last film that I saw, and because the magnitude of the special effects – all intending to show how vulnerable and small the individual is in the face of modern state control – has almost the quality of myth about it. In the end Smith beats the gigantic system and emerges black and beautiful, a shining hero and saviour of the day – perfect husband, father and gentleman.

I use this introduction because I think that you have here a kind of picture of what vocation, or 'calling', is about. Don't worry, I don't think that any of us will be chased by machine-gun-toting helicopters. Rather what I am thinking of is the fact that, without knowing it, each of you has been called to a destiny. God says, 'Before you were in the womb, I knew you,' God has called you and in his story you are the hero and the star. You won't see it that way, any more than the reluctant hero of the film did. But you are called to play a part in the story of salvation. Cardinal Newman once wrote:

God has called me to do him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission – I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.

Some people seem to have a clear sense that God has chosen them. St Paul on the Damascus road may be an example of this – a conversion experience so strong that, after it, life can never be the same. Some people do see God calling them in this way. Some are happy about it, while others see it but don't like the implications of it because it seems to take away their freedom. I think C. S. Lewis described himself as Christianity's most reluctant convert.

For most of us there is no Damascus road, no blinding light, no clear-cut command. It is rather that God creeps up on us, pushes us this way, prevents us going that way, opens one door, keeps another firmly shut, until we find that we are going the way that he wants us to. Sometimes he pushes us by making our present condition uncomfortable; sometimes he entices us by making the next stage look attractive. Think of the things that have influenced you: a mother's prayers, the advantage of a good upbringing, the adversity of a bad one, attendance at Sunday School and church, good youth leaders and good examples. Often it is because people rely on you, you find yourself helping, volunteering for jobs about the church, coming on conferences like this one, until the next thing that God wants of you becomes obvious.

If I can testify personally, I probably wouldn't be here today if my sister had not taught me to say my prayers when I was a toddler. I owe much to the ministers who taught me about God when I was a teenager – even though I thought that I never listened to them. One of my chief debts is to the officers of the Boys' Brigade whose examples of love and sacrifice taught me something about the vision of the kingdom of God.

The signs will be different for each of you but if you read the story of your life, you will see that it is one where God has pulled you and pushed you, sometimes gently, sometimes roughly, to help you to become who you are now. He wants you for his service, but before that he wants you to love him, and before *that* he wants you to know that he loves you. And this is the heart of vocation! God loves you! He only calls you because he loves. The heart of the gospel is John 3.16: 'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son.' He calls us to be patterned on that love; he calls us to keep the message of Jesus before the world.

God loves the world so much that he wants it to be full of love, joy, and peace. Well, if he is all-powerful, why doesn't he see to that himself? Why does he need people like you and me to do his work for him? I don't know the answer to that. I do know that in a world where people are bombed because of their colour or religion or sexual orientation, humanity needs the good news of love. I believe too that God chose to save us through human flesh. He loved us so much that he gave his Son in the flesh. It is because of that love that he has chosen you and me – baptized Christians – to carry the message of Jesus the Saviour to all the world. He wants to love humanity through you, through me. So he calls us, calls us into his Church through baptism, and he sends us out to do his will.

That's all very well, each of us will say. I accept that God loves me. I accept that he wants me. But what does he want of me? Why am I here on this vocations conference? Well, it is pretty certain that he is unlikely to want any of us to be Archbishop of Canterbury, so you can relax on that score. God has called some people to be his priests and ministers. He has probably called some of you, even if you don't know it yet. You may have a feeling that this is so but you are embarrassed or frightened. You don't want to push yourself, people will laugh, you haven't the education or the money.

Don't hold back for any of these reasons. Talk to your vicar. You may or you may not have a vocation to the priesthood but you will not be left to find that out on your own. Your vicar will advise you. The diocesan director of ordinands will advise you. The Advisory Board of Ministry (ABM) will advise you. And so the Church's discernment guided by the Holy Spirit will help you, and if you are truly called to the ordained ministry then God will give you the gifts necessary to fulfil that call.

I can recall how, just over thirty years ago, I took the first step that would lead to my ordination. I felt so foolish, I was afraid of what my friends would say, what my man would say. I set out for the vicarage and I walked past it about five times before I took the courage to push the doorbell. It was a long way from that ring until I was actually ordained, and I might have discovered that it was not the life that God had in store for me, but without ringing that bell I would never have known.

Not everyone here will be called to the priesthood but you are all called to share in the ministry. 'We are the Body of Christ and each individually members of it,' says St Paul, and if that Body is to be healthy and active we must all be prepared to play our part. So what does the Church need? She needs ministers, both ordained and lay, to lead in the services of praise and thanksgiving; not only bishops, priests, and deacons but lay readers, eucharistic ministers, servers, and Church Army officers. She needs church wardens and PCC members to share in the responsibilities of administration. (How many of you have been to the PCC AGM?) She needs Sunday School teachers and youth leaders to encourage and support young people. People with ideas, people with talents, people with skills. Do you play a musical instrument? Don't just blow your own trumpet, offer to play at evensong or Mass. Write or draw for the magazine. Most of all, love – the greatest gift. Help and encourage others in your congregation. With the vicar's permission you could visit the sick or the elderly. Some may be parish helpers where others may offer themselves on a wider field as diocesan representatives or in voluntary services to things like OXFAM or hospice work. Some of you might even be called to be monks or nuns.

But I don't feel called by God. Don't you have to be special? Don't you have to be clever? Surely you have at least to be good? What would God want of

somebody like me? I don't know whether or not these are your questions, but they were mine many years ago and they are still mine, because I'm one of those Christians who has not been able to see the plot. I just go on asking, 'Why me?' and God seems to say, 'Just because you are there.'

You would think that God would get tired of these protests. He has heard them so often. Moses protests, 'Don't send me, I can't speak proper, so I can't.' Jeremiah says, 'I'm too young to go, I'm only a youth.' Isaiah cries, 'I'm not holy enough, I'm a man of unclean lips.' Mary trembles with fear at the awesomeness of her vocation and the women who are given the resurrection message 'take to their heels and run'.

'Why me? I'm not good enough.' Of course you are not good enough and there is somebody next door or up the street who is holier, more beautiful, fitter, more talented, better suited... But, it is you that God is calling! It is me with all my faults, with all my sins, with all my weakness that he wants. Actually there is no one good enough. We are all weak, sinful, strange... but through weakness and strangeness and even because of our sinfulness, God uses us to bring the message of love to the world that his Son died to save.

And so we seem to be back to Will Smith and *Enemy of the State*. He was ordinary, he was unobtrusive, a family man, in love with his wife, the father of a delightful cheeky young boy. He was not interested in politics. He just wanted to get on with life. Suddenly and through the very ordinary, buying a birthday present for his wife, he finds himself caught up in the great schemes of politicians and policemen to become an instrument of justice and righteousness.

We are ordinary people, we like to keep ourselves to ourselves. We have neat comfortable worlds. But God has laid his hand upon us. We are called into the great story of salvation. Our part may be small, or it may be great, but, if God has given it to us, then it is necessary. So we can say with Cardinal Newman:

'Don't send me! I'm not big enough!'

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connections between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do his work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place – while not intending it – if I do but keep His commandments.

God wants you, he wants me. He says to us through his Son, 'The fields are white, but the labourers are few.' Pray then the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest. Amen.

3

Some conference participants' views

The conference was influential in my consideration of a vocation as it underscored the place and role of black people in the Church of England. Knowledge of CMEAC was also rewarding from the point of view of knowing that the Church has recognized and provided a space (even if limited) for the concerns of black people to be taken on board.

I am currently in the process of meeting with the director of ordinands from my diocese for consideration by a selection board for NSM.

Guy Hewitt, participant 1998

There is a real need to have a vocations conference specifically for minority ethnic Anglicans. People of colour are underrepresented within the Church of England. The absence of young minority ethnic people on theological courses could be due to an unspoken view that spiritual leadership in the Church is primarily a Caucasian responsibility. The CMEAC conference made it clear from the outset that vocation is not only the 'thing' that happens when you get ordained as a priest; instead vocation was presented as something every believer is called to work out. The task for each individual is to discover what this may be. Throughout the weekend, lay and ordained people serving God in church and community shared their stories and answered questions. What I enjoyed most about the weekend was that *everybody* was involved.

Many young people of colour are reluctant to be a part of an institution they feel has not been sympathetic to their culture. My concern is that young people from minority ethnic backgrounds bring a unique gift of ministry to the church and wider society, yet they are not encouraged to take up positions of leadership and service. What our Church needs in the next millennium is a more culturally diverse lay and ordained leadership. If

there is another event, then I would urge young people with a calling to attend and learn practical ways to serve our Lord and community. Since the 1998 CMEAC vocations conference, this participant has been ordained and is now working as a team vicar in Leeds.

The Revd Calvert Prentis, participant 1998

'What is that in your hand?' This question was asked in turn of Moses by Yahweh, of a young boy in the USA during a sermon, and of those of us at Whirlow Grange (Sheffield, England) by the Revd Charles Lawrence in March last year. At a conference organized by the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns young people were invited to discuss and discern vocations. We shared an informal weekend, with the focus on 'Serving God in Church and Community'. That both venue and theme are to be repeated in 1999 with different participants is evidence of its success.

There have been occasions when others have tried to separate my spirituality and compound ethnicity, especially regarding the culture and language of worship. However, the support received from the Church of England – especially in the persons of role models – has been encouraging. The important concept that ministry is from God, and therefore vital and varied, is one that I have carried with me.

Moses' staff was later used to give life and strength to the Lord's people, and the young boy who took his new camera to church used photography to inspire others in mission. The pens I held when asked 'What is that in your hand?' have been put to use. I regard short pieces in the *British Medical Journal* and *The Times* of 13 February, in amongst the routine of college assignments, as a sign of such. Their subjects, ethnicity and Englishness, are related and important to many minority ethnic Anglicans. CMEAC has encouraged me to discover more of the person God has made me; perhaps my vocation will involve writing?

May the Holy Spirit inspire all for service. As they take note of what they have in their hands – the gifts they have been assigned – may our Lord use his Church, in his hands, to further his Kingdom.

David Dean, participant 1998

I was somewhat apprehensive, not knowing what to expect at the conference since I am Korean, but as soon as I arrived, I knew God was there to allay my fears. Father John's message, 'Don't send me, I'm not big enough', was very timely for me and has been a great encouragement since. All the talks and testimonies were so moving and I drew much comfort and strength from them all. I met other minority ethnic people in the Anglican Church and I thank all the CMEAC planning committee who organized such a wonderful conference.

Teasu Durrance, participant 1999

The vocations weekend was a time of great encouragement, fellowship and sharing of faith. I've been with my church for a year doing youth and school work. The conference was definitely an eye-opener about the great need for minority ethnic people to be considered for ordained and lay ministries.

I spoke to people who had been considering a role with the Church but who were feeling a bit discouraged. The sessions led by minority ethnic people who were now successful in their chosen ministries proved to be a great encouragement and a motivation for those who had suffered knock-backs not to give up. I was inspired by talking to these facilitators.

I was most challenged by Father John's 'Don't send me, I'm not big enough'. This was very significant for me as I sometimes use that excuse myself. What I took away with me is this: it's not in our strength that God sends us out, but in his power and his grace. He chooses to use us despite our weaknesses. Father John's message challenged me to take a step towards what I feel God has put in my heart, which at the moment is working with young people.

Sarah Otomnu, participant 1999

4

Conference contributions

I would like to start by offering my thanks to all those who have organized this important event and I am humbled at being asked to share some of my thoughts with you today.

This area, Whirlow Grange and Whirlow Park, brings back many memories; I have been here before. I was a student in Sheffield and so was a girlfriend of mine, who went on to start her first job in Whirlow Park when it was occupied by a computer software company. I am proud to say that she is now my wife! We live in London with our two children, Gabriella who is five and Bartholomew who is one and a half.

My background is in engineering, mathematics and design, although if someone asks me to describe what I do for a living, I tell them that I sell. I sell ideas, concepts and solutions to any number of people and all different kinds of people. In the brochure however I describe myself as a designer of buildings – which is the end-product in most cases.

If I look back on my calling or vocation, I have never actually established the point where it all started. It came to a head however a few years ago when I was getting more and more involved in my local church in the wonderful diocese of Southwark. I was secretary of the PCC, I was running the youth group, I was dealing with the restoration of the church hall and vestry and so on. But I was not satisfied, I wasn't fulfilled and then one day it dawned on me what God was asking me to do. And because I can sometimes be a bit slow on the uptake, he made sure that several other people made me realize as well!

So then the fun really started! Eventually, as I am sure you know, you get sent to a selection conference and following that you are sent for some theological training. The course is run by the South-East Institute of Theological Education (SEITE) and is a three-year, part-time course. It takes

place on one evening a week and we have about seven residential weekends a year with a ten-day summer school in July or August. In addition there are lots of assignments, and various different types of coursework, so there is the need to spend a fair bit of time reading and researching subjects or issues. When I embarked on the course I was told that it was not easy – and they were right, not necessarily from an academic point of view but more from a ‘life’ point of view. It is sometimes quite a challenge balancing course, church, business and family commitments, but you get through.

You are also required to do a placement. In our case they asked where we would like to do a placement, e.g. prison, hospital, industry; and then they sent you somewhere else (unfamiliar environment). In my case I asked to go and work with a hospital chaplain, and I was sent to the Army – to the Welsh Guards.

This was an enormously rich experience. There are no black soldiers, not to mention officers, in the Welsh Guards so I knew it was going to be interesting. The Welsh Guards are part of the Household Division (who in simple terms are the ones who stand outside Buckingham Palace) and are semi-aristocratic in terms of their officers. The majority of the officers I met were quite young (early twenties) and had been schooled at Eton or Harrow, whereas the soldiers it seemed came from the dole queues of South Wales, which for a lot of them is where they returned after serving their time in the regiment. The army chaplain I was attached to was wonderful and gave me a real insight into his work.

I took part in a 48-hour exercise, without sleep, getting as cold, wet and hungry as everyone else did. We also took part in a night ambush that seemed like the loudest and brightest firework display I had ever experienced.

We talked about the demands of the regiment’s recent seven-month tour to Northern Ireland and the strain this places on the soldiers and their families. We talked with the soldiers about death and dying and their perceptions of God.

We also discussed the Falklands War and the impact of the *Sir Galahad* bombing on the regiment and the survivors.

I am in my final year of training and will be ordained in Southwark Cathedral at the end of September. I am proud to say that our bishops in Southwark do an enormous amount in terms of racial justice: Bishop Wilfred has been involved with the Stephen Lawrence family, and Bishop Tom Butler hit the headlines recently with the inquiry into racism in the Church.

We also had the Southwark Black Forum recently where I was asked to speak about ‘pioneering’. You see, on the SEITE course that I am on, I am the only black ordinand out of the three years, and I struggle with the fact that when I leave, there will be nobody to ‘pass the baton on to’. Part of the reason why I am here today is to make sure that that doesn’t happen again.

The Revd Jeremy Blunden, facilitator (ordained September 1999)

One of the criteria for selection to ordained and accredited lay ministry in the Church of England states that:

Candidates should show the ability to offer leadership in the Church community and to some extent in the wider community. This ability includes the capacity to offer an example of faith and discipleship, to collaborate effectively with others, as well as to guide and shape the life of the Church community in its mission to the world.

Experience at selection conference shows that quite a number of minority ethnic candidates are less confident about their ability to articulate their thoughts and to enable and facilitate others in discussion, which is a key element in leadership and collaboration. So in order to give them a taster of what they would be expected to do as future church leaders and ministers, CMEAC conference participants took part in a group exercise similar to one they would be expected to undertake at a selection conference. Some facilitators were invited to act as observers.

The feedback session was useful in that general comments were made by the observers, and participants shared what it felt like doing the exercise and being observed. Participants were encouraged to see where they were at and what needed to be done in order to help them improve their group work skills and build self-confidence. The important thing to remember is that we all have something to say, and so we need to give careful thought as to how we are going to say it, have the confidence to say it, in a way that will be life-giving and enhancing to others, and above all show that we are listening to what is being said. I think participants went away feeling both challenged and encouraged.

Mrs Margaret Sentamu, Senior Selection Secretary, former ABM selector

It is a real pleasure for me as a vocations officer to meet so many of you who are considering your personal vocation at the moment, but it is, in a way, the other half of my job which has brought me here, because I am also a selection secretary. I am part of the team of eight men and women who staff those selection conferences until recently known affectionately (or perhaps not so affectionately) as an 'ABM'.

To work for ABM is always to be 'them' and not 'us'. When people want someone to blame for something or other, it is often easier to blame a mysterious central body than anything else and so I have become used to being one of 'them' – 'them that' don't look for the right things in candidates, 'them that' don't train clergy properly, 'them that' don't find sufficient numbers of new vicars – you name it.

It was not always so, however; I used to be one of 'us'. After reading for a degree in theology at KCL [King's College London] and training at theological college, I was ordained to serve a curacy in the diocese of Ripon where I was curate in the prosperous town of Knaresborough before serving a second curacy in Darwen, Lancashire. Here I was also priest in charge of Tockholes, where there were runnoured to be treacle mines. I was then vicar of St Mary Magdalene's, Accrington, for five years and included the Stanley ground in my patch. Whilst there, I also experienced hospital

and school chaplaincy and was for three years assistant diocesan director of ordinands (ADDO). So much for the past; I now work for what at the beginning of this year became the Ministry Division of the Archbishops' Council – which is so much easier to say than ABM [Advisory Board of Ministry].

In an episcopal church, a church governed by bishops, it is the bishop of the local church who must decide who is to be ordained and who is not. He orders the relationships, the orders within the local church, making some deacons and some priests for the church in his care. Likewise the bishop licenses people to other particular ministries in that part of the Church to which and for which he is responsible. The wisest of men, however, cannot expect to have the time and gifts in every diocese to undertake this responsibility alone. The bishops collectively ask the advice of their selectors as to whom they should ordain and whom they should not. Bishops' selection conferences (for that is their proper name) are the Church's means of discovering who ought and who ought not to be ordained.

When a bishop wishes to sponsor a candidate who has worked with the DDO and others, and who has perhaps been through some local selection procedures, he asks us on his behalf to invite them to a selection conference. What I propose to do now, is to tell you how that works from the point of an invitation being issued.

Once a candidate has been invited to one of the 50 selection conferences held each year, they will be asked to supply a number of referees:

- ❖ one should be their chaplain or parish priest;
- ❖ one should be a lay Christian who knows something of their life in the Christian community;
- ❖ one should be an occupational referee, a boss perhaps or a colleague;
- ❖ one should be an educational referee, able to say something about their ability to learn and in what ways – a diocesan course tutor for example;
- ❖ the referees should include people of both sexes.

Each referee will fill in a slightly different (colour-coded) form, asking questions relating to the kind of reference they have been asked for. These are treated in the strictest confidence and will not normally be seen by anyone other than our staff, the selectors and later, the bishop.

Each candidate is also asked to supply some detail as to their ethnic origin for monitoring purposes and to fill in a form relating to their medical health. We do not need to have magnificently perfect specimens of physical humanity, but we need to know that there is no danger of the Church endangering their physical or mental health or that of others. The Pension Board needs to know that we are not choosing unreasonable hostages to fortune for them. Where there are concerns or doubts, our Senior Medical Officer sees the person. Each candidate is also required to make a declaration of their criminal record and give permission for a cross-check.

More importantly, each candidate should fill in a registration form which gives the selectors information about their personal details, education, work experience, understanding of ministry, story of vocation, etc. This is a most important document and the primary written source of information from the candidates themselves. It needs to be filled in very carefully because, like the confidential references, it is used in evidence by the selectors.

By the time the conference happens, we will have gathered four or five references, medical clearance, a criminal record declaration and cross-check, a faculty for those who are divorced or married to a divorcee and sponsoring papers from the DDO giving his/her impression of the candidate.

In advance of the conference the registration form, references and sponsoring papers will have been sent to the selectors who will meet the candidate at the selection conference. The selectors are appointed by the diocesan bishops and include an enormous variety of people: housewives, doctors, teachers, professors, soldiers, judges, suffragan bishops, parish priests, archdeacons and deans – you name them! We simply invite them

to come to particular conferences to try and get some sort of balance of gender, lay/clerical, age and perhaps theological tradition as well as diary!

The conferences are held in a variety of venues around the country, mostly diocesan retreat houses – from Woking to Chester. One of the things about my job is that it enables me to become something of an expert, a connoisseur of retreat houses. On Monday, I travelled to Chester and to a house, well two actually, next to the bishop's overlooking the cathedral. The rooms are basic, like the sanitation. The food is 'interesting' and the house rules memorable. It is run by a wonderful group of Sisters of the Community of the Holy Name and, like many religious houses, seems to run on tea and Marmite. It is perhaps the only place left on God's earth that still serves Dream Topping and a particular kind of ground bark, which masquerades as coffee. They still have Vim in the bathrooms and the baths seem liberally dusted in it. I love it.

It is at such a venue that the candidate arrives early on a Monday evening for supper. Candidates eat separately from selectors who will be getting to know one another over a separate repast. But afterwards everyone meets up to hear how the conference will work and to meet each other over an ice-breaking game. An act of worship completes the evening (if you don't count visits to the pub). Aside from me or my colleagues and the sixteen candidates, there are six selectors grouped into two teams. Each team will meet eight of the candidates and in some ways it is really two conferences running at once – each with eight candidates and three selectors. Each team will have a senior selector, an educational selector and a pastoral selector. Over the Tuesday and Wednesday, each candidate will meet his or her three selectors for a 50-minute interview with each, covering ground particular to each selector's category.

On the Tuesday morning candidates may attend the Eucharist, which will be celebrated each day. The celebrant will have been announced in advance so that those opposed to the ordination of women may take

appropriate action (or inaction) if seen fit: only selectors take leading roles so that others don't have to worry about it, except perhaps playing the piano.

After a hearty breakfast of damp cornflakes and dodgy toast, candidates are asked to complete what is called a personal inventory, a series of open-ended questions to which there are no right or wrong answers but which tell the selectors more about each individual. They will read them and use them in the preparation of interviews so that candidates and selectors both have the same things at the top of their minds when they meet. This takes 40 minutes and is followed by one of the two psychometric tests, which cause some people so much anxiety.

These tests are only used to rule people in and cannot be used to rule people out. Perhaps they are best viewed as word and pattern puzzles. There is no pass-mark, but they do help give an impression of people's relative strengths in deductive and verbal reasoning.

During the Tuesday and Wednesday, candidates individually complete a written exercise, some pastoral situation to wrestle with and write about appropriately. On the Wednesday, there is a group exercise when the team of eight candidates forms a committee and each takes a turn at chairing and trying to achieve a particular aim.

Each conference is liberally sprinkled with tea and coffee breaks and opportunities for private and collective prayer. Apart from the daily Eucharist, there is evensong (often BCP) before supper on the Tuesday at which the selection secretary gives an address. Later there is compline. At the end there is a non-eucharistic service when a senior selector preaches. We use services authorized by the Church of England in a variety of ways and hope that people will feel able to join in. No note is taken of whether you do triple genuflections at the flower-stand or raise a hand in praise. What goes on in chapel is not assessed — not even attendance.

On the Wednesday evening when candidates have gone, selectors remain to discuss what they have learned about each candidate and to write a

report to each sponsoring bishop. Whilst their reports will vary in emphasis, the selectors must be unanimous in their recommendation to the bishop, which must be based on evidence gleaned from five tools:

- ❖ personal inventory
- ❖ interview
- ❖ written exercise
- ❖ group exercise
- ❖ cognitive tests.

They should also give due weight to what referees and DDOs have said.

There is no quota selectors should keep to. They may recommend all or none of their candidates. They may also make certain conditions about training. The task takes as long as it takes but generally selectors need a good 24 hours after candidates have gone before they complete their work and send me off with their scrawling handwritten scripts. I then have to soothe my secretary as she reworks the scribble of stroke-ridden spiders that have fallen into inkwells into beautifully typed script for their mitred Lordships.

The task of the conference is then done. Once the reports are typed up they are sent to the bishops as advice. Generally the men in purple accept the advice they are offered. They wouldn't have entrusted their candidates to the system if they did not believe it offered sound advice for the most part — *but* the decision to accept or set aside the advice of the selectors is an episcopal one.

We keep on file the response of each bishop and follow the progress of those he decides to send into training.

Part of my job is also to produce the literature I have brought with me today and in this book (*Professional Ministries in the Church of England*) you will find a written record of what to expect at a selection conference, among other material. There is also a list of the criteria against which every candidate is considered. Last year some 581 individuals were recommended for ordained ministry of one kind or another.

It is an enormous privilege to meet with and work with those candidates and selectors I meet in this job and is more than adequate compensation for always being 'them' and never 'us'. Maybe I shall be meeting some of you.

**The Revd Mark Sowerby,
Vocations Officer and Selection Secretary,
Ministry Division of the Church of England**

5

Further conference reflections

To sum up my feelings of the second vocations conference is to say that what I lived through was the disciples' Ascension to Pentecost experience in a weekend. I went to Whirlow Grange with a sense of expectation with all the planning that had gone before, with 'Ascension feelings' as we literally drove up the hill from the valley below. We had all gone there as strangers to each other, but with a purpose – and it was wonderful to see from the opening introductions that everyone felt at home. The signature to the weekend was one of belonging, of not having to justify one's presence there and of mutual friendship and care.

Words that ring in my ears from the opening keynote address led by Father John Gribben are 'Don't send me, I'm not big enough' – his initial response to his calling. It was particularly significant coming from a man who was diminutive in stature but a giant in his pastoral care and compassion over the weekend. He reminded us of biblical figures who, like him, had sought an excuse to disregard their call:

Moses: 'I can't talk proper!'

Jeremiah: 'I'm not old enough!'

Isaiah: 'I'm not holy enough!'

To that I add: 'Don't send her – she's not white enough!'

This was the experience for the majority of participants. As a member of the planning group who had carefully devised a sampler of the myriad ministries that make up the Church of England I was taken aback by the number of people who'd already 'been there'. Several of those who had come had not only experienced rejection in their church pew but by bureaucratic structures and the insensitivity of senior clergy. I was humbled by the perseverance of those who had been through the

selection process and been turned down – twice – yet still sought to serve God in the Church of England.

I realized quickly that minority ethnic Anglicans in general and the young people attending the conference in particular were a people of pain. It was evident that those who came needed first to unburden themselves and through individual testimonies there came an outpouring of bottled-up pain from those who, although they had heard the message: 'Don't send them – they are not good enough!', nevertheless strove to fulfil their calling. Just as the disciples were filled with awe watching after the ascended Christ, we too were filled with awe and were sometimes equally at a loss how to respond.

It was encouraging to listen in open forum to the experiences of chiefly minority ethnic people serving as Readers, prison and university chaplains, Church Army officers, religious, as well as an ordinand. An added bonus was the opportunity to reflect and question further in private conversation those who had contributed.

Taking part in a simulation conducted by the Ministry Division was a taster of the criteria applied in the selection process, and I discovered that every area of our lives – personal, social, educational – was scrutinized to assess our skills, strengths and weaknesses. To many of those who attended, this part of the weekend was the turning point.

We had come with our gifts, with our stories of pain and rejection – but it was now up to us to look to the future; for again as we heard during the weekend: 'Where God calls, the Spirit equips.' It was from this that people could feel upheld, strengthened and ready to take the next step.

Like the disciples at the Ascension, I felt the presence of angels also telling us: 'You have seen, heard, witnessed. Now go forth and tell.' Like them commissioned to wait for the Holy Spirit, the Revd George Kooror exhorted us through our study of Scripture to consider the nature of what God was calling us to: to show God's love in a world of pain where, like those of us attending, people suffer.

Thuma mina	Send me Jesus
Thuma mina	Send me Jesus
Thuma mina	Send me Jesus
Somandla	Send me, Lord

The high point of the weekend was the build-up to the Eucharist on Sunday, significant for being the day of Pentecost. Images of the day include the splendour of the altar, the humility of the Revd Charles Lawrence serving at the Lord's table and rejoicing in his twenty-fourth year of ordination, and the brilliance of the morning sun as it streamed into the chapel on that day. The day itself reminded those of us gathered around the altar, of the gifts of the Spirit, freely given to God's people. It also called to mind the cacophony and discord of Babel defeated by the power of the Holy Spirit on that first Pentecost.

We had come to Sheffield from many parts of England, from many cultures, originating from other lands and speaking many tongues, to explore vocation. Disaffected and distressed on arrival, we left the conference cherished in the sight of God and eager to 'go forth and tell'. Minority ethnic Anglicans of many cultures and tongues, we have the same gifts from the same Spirit to use in the Church of England. Leaders of the Church, bishops, DDOs, and vocations advisers – come forward, receive, and embrace.

Ms Smitha Prasadani, Chairman of CMEAC Youth Issues Sub-committee

The 1999 CMEAC vocations conference took place on the same weekend as the 1999 FA Cup final between Newcastle United ('boo!') and Manchester United (even bigger 'boo!'). Somehow, despite all my prayers to the contrary, 'Man United' completed what was to be the second leg of an historic treble. When 4.45 p.m. came around on Saturday 22 May, Wembley was filled with an equal measure of jubilation and despondency. The despair of the Geordie fans and players after having failed yet again in their bid for silverware contrasted absolutely with the joy of the Mancunians as they celebrated, joy and pain co-existing in the same space. The participants at the Whirlow Grange conference experienced something

similar; it was a time for acknowledging suffering and finding solutions for it.

The participants were culturally diverse, with roots in Oxford, Uganda and Fiji and lots of places in between. On the surface they seemed to have very little in common, the obvious bond being their desire to serve their communities and the Church of England. Over the weekend, that bond of faith and the desire to serve was to bring these strangers together to form a family. What was immediately obvious was these were educated people: a curate, a teacher, a social worker, and what was soon revealed was the sheer variety of talents and gifts they had to offer both the conference and the wider Church. Yet they were all telling us that their resources and skills were being squandered by a Church that could ill afford to waste such abilities.

'My Journey of Faith' is a tool which I have used successfully at conferences and workshops in the past; it works equally well with people young and old. It has proved to be a useful device for self-analysis; questions participants have to ask themselves include: 'Where have I come from?' 'Is this where I want to be?' 'Where do I want to go from here?' It also serves as an acknowledgement of where God has brought them thus far, which in turn leads to thanksgiving. The 'Journeys of Faith' made a huge impact on the conference, and proved to be an invaluable way of getting participants to open up to each other. The strength of character of the participants was openly demonstrated again and again, both in the sharing of experiences and in their reaction to what they heard.

Some of the participants had obviously been bottling up painful experiences for many years. This was the first time they had felt emotionally supported to share harrowing and traumatic chapters in their lives and to talk openly about extremely hurtful experiences of rejection in church as they responded to their call to serve. It is a testimony to the sense of community atmosphere that everyone, especially the planning group, had worked hard to foster and nourish that participants felt supported enough to expose publicly such raw wounds.

The participants left Sheffield with such a great sense of hope at the end of a tiring weekend. They felt encouraged, supported and motivated. Those of us on the planning group also came away with a fresh sense of purpose; the hard work we had put in to planning the conference had been appreciated and validated. At some stages during the conference, I felt extremely disheartened. I was weighed down by my sense of disbelief that even now, a matter of weeks away from the twenty-first century, the twin evils of racism and discrimination was still being carried out by people in the church I belonged to. I felt disgusted and discouraged. As a church we have so much work to do, firstly to recognize and secondly to address its failings in the area of minority ethnic vocations.

Miss Anne-Marie Parker, CMEAC intern

6

Evaluation of conferences

**Ms Josile Munro, member of CMEAC
Youth Issues Sub-committee**

INTRODUCTION

The analysis comes from 23 evaluations received from the participants after the 1998 and 1999 vocation weekends – this is a 100 per cent response. In total, there were 75 specific responses to five questions, including some in the form of short paragraphs.

The bulk of the detailed feedback concerned the structure of the weekend, the facilities, etc. There were requests for information about the work of CMEAC, and what dioceses and parishes need to be doing in this area of work. The comments received were very thoughtful and showed a deep commitment to the Church. All are highly active Christians, many taking major roles in their local churches.

Q1 WHAT PEOPLE FOUND MOST HELPFUL

All participants answered this question, with 30 separate responses.

Many found the sessions which concerned the selection process for ordained ministry very helpful. Others found that the sessions in which people were speaking from personal experience on how they began in their ministries very helpful and empowering. There were many comments on the chance to share and enjoy fellowship with other minority ethnic Anglicans seeking a vocation in the Church. Some comments indicated that those seeking a vocation in the Church felt very isolated. At the 1999 conference, a new dimension was explored when each participant talked

about their own faith journey. In 1999 the opportunity for each participant to share their faith journey was cited as being 'most helpful'. This was a very powerful experience; their journeys reflected tremendous commitment and faith in God. Participants also commented how much they enjoyed learning about the work of CMEAC, as many had not heard about the work before the vocation weekend. They were informed that such work was being carried out.

Q2 WHAT PEOPLE FOUND LEAST HELPFUL

There were 19 separate responses. Amongst these were many positive statements or a statement that they found nothing unhelpful. In 1998, a common concern was a lack of time between sessions and a request for more time to find out about each other. In 1999, the programme was changed to take account of this. There were a few comments in this section about the facilities and only one or two found the location difficult.

Q3 IF A SIMILAR EVENT WERE TO BE ORGANIZED AGAIN IN THE FUTURE WHAT CHANGES OR ADDITIONS IF ANY WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MADE IN THE PROGRAMME?

Twenty-three separate responses were received. The comments were varied and it is difficult to discern any particular trend. A few people wanted more space in the programme. Two respondents (1 in 1998 and 1 in 1999) wanted more sessions on other church careers. Other changes to the programmes concerned the need to tailor the programme to individual needs, e.g. time to consider problems or challenges participants face in the parish.

Q4 OTHER COMMENTS

By the time the participants had encountered this question they clearly felt that they had given us as much feedback as they wanted to or felt able to. This was the least answered question. Of the 13 separate comments

received, the general tenor was that the participants wanted many more such weekends; typical responses were: 'Enjoyed each day!' 'Every day had something to offer.' 'Please can we have more!'

CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that participants found the conferences empowering and enjoyable. The sessions on selection conferences and inputs on faith journeys were particularly important. The structure of any vocation conference must involve balancing time for relaxation and informal meetings with formal sessions where needs and questions regarding vocation are met.

The responses indicate a real need for vocations conferences aimed specifically at minority ethnic Anglicans. Many participants feel very isolated and unsupported by official church structures in responding to their vocations.

Vignettes

I am the fruit of English and Western missionaries.

What is it that God is calling us to?

I feel strengthened, encouraged and supported. God is smiling at me and I am smiling back.

God's grace, God's calling, God's equipping.

The vocations conference filled a very deep need.

When are you getting ordained?

The gospel is good news because it gives meaning to our spirits, to the hardships of life.

The journey of faith is a continuous process.

*Being called by God into a relationship with people.
Being called by God into a relationship with the family.*

Test what you are not called to.



Recommendations arising out of the two vocations conferences

1. DIOCESAN BISHOPS

The Committee recommends that bishops show clear support for any minority ethnic Anglicans' vocations to accredited ministries, and for those already exercising these ministries.

2. DIOCESAN BISHOPS

Recognizing the significance of role models, CMEAC recommends that diocesan bishops need to actively encourage minority ethnic Anglicans in accredited ministries to their dioceses.

Young people obviously need to see role models in vocations to the ministry, and congregations need to be familiar with minority ethnic people exercising leadership skills within the Church, otherwise the Church will be regarded as having a hidden racist agenda.

(Source: *Passing Winter: a sequel to Seeds of Hope*, Church House Publishing, 1996)

3. DIOCESAN BISHOPS

As more than 40 per cent of the minority ethnic people in the Church of England are British-born, every effort should be made to recruit and support them in their ministry.

The British scene is different from Africa, Asia or the Caribbean. CMEAC recommends that the Church encourage and support indigenous people rather than go for the easy

option of looking for the overseas Church to provide leaders. This reinforces the notion that minority ethnic people are essentially foreign and transitory.

(Source: *Seeds of Hope: Report of a Survey on Combating Racism in the Dioceses of the Church of England*, General Synod of the Church of England, 1991)

4. DIOCESAN DIRECTORS OF ORDINANDS (DDOs)

The Committee **recommends** that DDOs acknowledge and value cultural diversity and not seek to impose a cultural norm on all. In assuming a cultural norm, it is too easy to reject those who do not fit the stereotype.

5. DDOs AND VOCATIONS ADVISERS

In order to equip themselves better to serve God's Church and people, CMEAC **recommends** that DDOs and vocations advisers should undergo training in racism awareness and cultural diversity.

6. PARISH CLERGY

Parish clergy are often the first point of reference for those seeking to offer themselves for accredited ministry. Clergy need to be more aware that we are all made in the image of God, and are all his children. They need to be particularly sensitive in dealing with the sometimes fragile 'flower' of vocation which emerges.

CMEAC **recommends** that parish clergy seek to raise their own understanding of these issues.

7. PARISH CLERGY AND EDUCATION CHAPLAINS

The Committee **recommends** the following:

- a) Parish clergy and chaplains in places of education need to be alerted to the importance of affirming God not only to one particular group, but to all God's people.

- b) Clergy should be encouraged to seek out minority ethnic Anglicans, particularly young people, and explore with them where there might be a calling to a vocation in the Church.

8. PARISH CLERGY

Many minority ethnic Anglicans have been brought up to have a high regard for the office of priest. The Committee **recommends** that parish clergy should be aware of the responsibility which they have in this regard.

Our understanding of the nature of God, the nature of humanity, the nature of the Church means that we are fellow-citizens because we are fellow-saints. We must be converted into a Church which celebrates our diversity, where our identities are not black, brown or white but are in that redeemed humanity in Christ. This understanding of humanity and our true citizenship is the greatest gift the Church can offer to the world. Our use of language must always express our understanding of God's diverse one human race.

Postscript

In the wake of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, police forces throughout the country have been set quotas to ensure that representative numbers of minority ethnic people are recruited and retained. In many areas of public life a substantial amount of work is being done in combating racism, individually and institutionally. This is evident in the National Health Service, local government and education as well as many other areas.

Some have criticized the Church of England for not doing enough or not doing anything about these important matters. Against that it must be said that the Committee for Black Anglican Concerns (CBAC), now CMEAC, has been in existence for nearly 13 years and that vocations conferences aimed directly at minority ethnic people took place in 1998 and 1999. The planning for these conferences goes back much further, and that is something for the Church of England to be proud of, particularly because it shows that we have been proactive and have not just responded reactively to forces within society.

The Revd Charles Lawrence

Chairman of Vocations Sub-committee of CMEAC

Letter from the Chairman of CMEAC with questions for discussion

Dear Friends,

On Father's Day 1999 we had a special liturgy where children were asked to invite their fathers. It was a wonderful and moving service. On the way out of church, a mother with her 11-year-old son at her side bearingly said to me, 'My son has just said that when he grows up, he wants to be a priest.' The young boy's name was Denzil. Something had inspired him during that service and for weeks I walked around with the sounds of those words echoing in my head.

When I visit families from the parish in their homes, one of the things I do is to talk to them about their faith journey. Where there are young people in the home, I always say to them, 'I want you to think and pray whether God may be calling you to full-time work in the church.' They are pleasantly surprised to hear me say this to them. On my part, I regard what I am doing as planting the seed.

As we begin this new millennium, I do believe very strongly that the Church's leadership, if it is to be credible, must reflect the body of Christ, multi-ethnic and diverse. Those within our congregations must know that it is possible for them to respond to God's call and exercise a ministry within the church.

I would dearly like all dioceses (the policy-makers), and in particular those with pastoral responsibility, to work together and encourage more candidates from a minority ethnic background to respond to their call from God. Perhaps you might wish to use the following three questions as a springboard for action in this area:

Questions for discussion

1. What is your diocese doing to identify and support any vocations from minority ethnic Anglicans?
 2. If your DDO and vocations adviser have had training in racism awareness and cultural diversity, how is this being used to assist them in their work? If they have had no training, what plans are there and can CMEAC be of assistance?
 3. Is there good practice in the diocese with respect to strategies for encouraging minority ethnic Anglicans to consider vocations, and can these be shared with other dioceses and with CMEAC?
- Yours sincerely,

The Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin

APPENDIX 2

Messages to participants, 1998 and 1999 vocations conferences

*My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, who are called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

I send you my greetings and my prayers for your time together at Whirlow Grange. This will be a challenging and I hope inspiring time for you all as you explore your understanding of God's calling.

We are all called to serve in different ways, and discerning God's plan for us can sometimes take time. I pray that this weekend, amongst fellow-explorers, will challenge you to go on looking and searching and serving, will encourage you in what you are already doing, and will strengthen you for the tasks which lie ahead of you when you return to your parishes and your work.

We in the minority ethnic communities have particular gifts, insights and special contributions we can offer in service to our brothers and sisters and to God. Let us take courage and strength from each other's stories and hopes, so that God will be magnified through the diversity with which he blesses us. Let us all make the difference. Harambee!

I pray for God's blessing on your study, on your worship and on your fellowship together this weekend.

For all that has been – THANKS

For all that shall be – YES

With deep bonds of affection,

The Right Revd Dr John Sentamu
Bishop of Stepney
Chairman of CMEAC 1991-9

God is good, generous and gracious. In his goodness he created and sustains this universe in which he has set us. In his generosity he gave his Son to set us free from destructive self-centredness for service to him and humankind, and in his graciousness he calls men and women to a share in the ministry of his Son. We are ordained to this ministry by our baptism and as we respond to his grace in our hearts we seek ever more opportunities to serve and please him.

This may well lead us to ask if God is calling us to a specific lifestyle which takes priority over other calls. Are we being called to the religious life as monks and nuns? Are we being called to the threefold ministry of deacon, priest and bishop in Christ's Church, or to some other form of ministry in the same Church?

In the Church, God provides us with means of discerning his will for us – prayer, openness to the counsel and advice of others, discussion and perseverance in prayer. A conference of this kind is a means to this end. God grants to all who seek to listen, grace to hear his voice.

The Right Revd Dr Wilfred Wood

Bishop of Croydon

**Consultant to the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns
Chairman of CMEAC 1987-91**

To be truly the Body of Christ is to recognize that we have something to give and something to take from each other. We have our gifts to give and as a learning community learn from each other. I have no doubt that your experiences will contribute to an ever-growing awareness of the depth of God's gifts to his Church, but equally, can we in wisdom listen to each other, whatever our ethnic background? We have an opportunity to model the Church as a whole and that interdependence which is so important to the growth of the gospel. May God bless you in our ministry together.

**The Right Revd Dr Michael Nazir-Ali
Bishop of Rochester**

I am so glad that, once again, the staff of the Ministry Division have been able to participate in the CMEAC vocations conference. It is of very great importance that we encourage more vocations amongst our Christian sisters and brothers from minority ethnic groups. We are enriched and encouraged by the ordinands, clergy, and Readers we already have and wish strongly to encourage more to consider the development of their gifts in these ways.

The entire Ministry Division in its different sections stands ready to co-operate at every point with CMEAC.

The Venerable Gordon Kuhrt

Chief Secretary

Ministry Division of the Church of England

APPENDIX 3

Resources

- Anglican Religious Communities Year Book 1999, Communities Consultative Council, Canterbury Press, 1998.
- Inside Faith – the Prison Service Chaplaincy*, HM Prison Service, HMSO, 1997.
- One Race the Human Race – Racial Justice Sunday Pack 2000*, Churches Commission for Racial Justice, 2000.
- Open Your Eyes and Look at the Fields!*, Church Army, 1998.
- The Passing Winter: A Sequel to 'Seeds of Hope'*, Church House Publishing, 1996.
- Professional Ministries in the Church of England*, Advisory Board of Ministry (now the Ministry Division), 1998.
- Reader Ministry: A Guide to the Work and Training of Readers*, Central Readers Council and Advisory Board of Ministry (now the Ministry Division), 1995.
- Seeds of Hope: Report of a Survey on Combating Racism in the Dioceses of the Church of England*, General Synod of the Church of England, 1991.
- Simplicity, Generosity and Freedom*, The Society of St Francis, The Friary, Hilfield, Dorchester, 1998.
- Simply Value Us: Meeting the Needs of Young Minority Ethnic Anglicans* (CMEAC Youth Research Project), Church House Publishing, 2000.
- Steps on the Road to Ministry: An Introduction to Ministry in the Church of England*, Advisory Board of Ministry (now the Ministry Division of the Church of England), 1997.
- Theological Training in the Church of England*, Advisory Board of Ministry (now the Ministry Division), n.d.
- Rowan Williams, *Commitment*, The Formation Team, The Society of St Francis, The Friary, Hilfield, Dorchester and St Francis Convent, 1998.
- Rowan Williams, *Vocation: Responding to the Call of God's Love*, The Vocations Team, The Society of St Francis, The Friary, Hilfield, Dorchester, 1991.
- Vocational Conferences 1999*, Advisory Board of Ministry (now the Ministry Division), 1999.
- What on Earth am I Here For?*, Advisory Board of Ministry (now the Ministry Division), 1997.

'As a Church we have so much to do – firstly to recognize and secondly to address its failing in the area of minority ethnic vocations.'

'My concern is that young people from minority ethnic backgrounds bring a unique gift of ministry to the Church and the wider society, yet they are not encouraged to take up positions of leadership and service. What our Church needs in the next millennium is a more culturally diverse lay and ordained leadership.'

Excerpts from the report

This report recognizes the diversity that is found within the Church and the benefits that such diversity brings, and it has been produced in the hope that it will encourage people from a range of backgrounds to consider vocations within the Church. The Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns is committed towards 'seeking the development and empowerment of minority ethnic Anglicans and in particular fostering and encouraging vocations within the Church.'

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