

## General Synod

### A note from the Prolocutors and Chair and Vice-Chair of the House of Laity

1. Synod members might be aware of the report [\*From Lament to Action\*](#) which was produced earlier this year by a Task Force appointed by the Archbishops. This report brought a wide ranging list of recommendations touching on a number of areas in the life of the Church, both at a national and local level.
2. To date, General Synod has not debated *From Lament to Action*, but you will note from the Business Committee report (GS 2233), if a request is made, there is a desire to accommodate an item on the agenda at a future group of sessions - supported by the newly formed Racial Justice Commission. Any debate is likely to focus on a range of issues around Racial Justice rather than confining itself to the recommendations found in *From Lament to Action*.
3. However, one of the recommendations from *From Lament to Action* (page 21) was for the General Synod **to co-opt 5 UKME/GMH<sup>1</sup> clergy and 5 UKME/GMH laity to serve as members of the General Synod for the 2021-2026 quinquennium**. As co-opted members, these 10 additional members would have speaking and voting rights.
4. A timetable and methodology for implementing this recommendation would need to be discussed by the relevant Standing Committee before formally being considered and debated by the Convocations and the House of Laity. Given the pressures on the Synodical timetable in November 2021, and the constraints of some Standing Orders, we anticipate the earliest opportunity for the Convocations and House of Laity to meet to make any in-principle decision and to consider specific proposals for co-option would be February 2022.
5. It is worth noting the process for co-opting members across these bodies varies and whilst some work has already taken place during the last quinquennium, (e.g. allowing the House of Laity to co-opt 5 members in one go if required), there are some practical questions around the recommendation which need to be considered. If the House of Laity or the individual Convocation chooses to take this forward, areas which require further discussion include:
  - a. Would such co-options arise from an electoral or an appointment process, assuming more than 10 people wish to be co-opted?
  - b. How do we ensure all who are eligible for co-option to both Houses are made aware of the opportunity?
  - c. Do we need to consider setting any eligibility criteria or threshold of experience?

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<sup>1</sup> UKME (United Kingdom Minority Ethnic) GMH (Global Majority Heritage)

- d. What is the relationship between any co-opted members to the General Synod and the clergy Participant Observers to which the House of Bishops has already agreed to (but not yet identified)?
6. Whilst these are four of the bigger process questions to be considered, there are of course additional points which will need to be worked through.
  7. Therefore, at this stage, as we start this new quinquennium, we simply wanted to acknowledge the recommendation found in paragraph 3 has not been forgotten and felt it would be helpful to outline the required next steps and processes required if this recommendation were to be implemented.
  8. As Officers of the Synod we are acutely aware that, although the Convocations and the House of Laity have distinct characters and governance arrangements, we all need to act together to ensure a common outcome is achieved. We will be keeping in regular touch with one another to maximise the possibility of such a conclusion being reached.
  9. We would be very willing to discuss this further with any Synod member, so please do be in touch with us if you would find that helpful.

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October 2021