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General Synod Elections 2015 – Address

I would first like to thank everyone who voted for me in 2010 giving me an opportunity to serve our Diocese of York on General Synod (GS) for a second term. The GS, as a representative gathering of the Church involving bishops, clergy and laity, is both legislative and deliberative as it considers and approves legislation affecting the whole of the Church of England, locally, nationally and globally. I am privileged to serve the Synod on various national committees including the Enabling Group working on ecumenical matters, the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglicans Concerns (CMEAC), and locally, York Ministry Course Council and Social Responsibility Council.

In the next five years the Synod is likely to debate multi-faith Britain, human sexuality, young people, dementia and schools mission and climate change. I hope that my previous experience on GS and as a Trustee of two charities, in York and London, will give me a realistic understanding of these issues and what can be achieved in a changing world where many difficult decisions will need to be made.

It is my aim to work towards a church which is generous, welcoming, inclusive and open. A church where everyone is able to fully participate in the membership and leadership of the church, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, wealth, sexual orientation or physical ability.

GS as a governing body has an excellent track record in preparing well researched reports and subsequently holding meaningful debates on their contents. However, implementing the good intentions appears to be more difficult. For example, it took over two decades to resolve the matter of Women in the Episcopate. It was an honour to be representing York Diocese on GS when the final vote was taken allowing women to join the House of Bishops and to ensure that those not in favour of female bishops were empathetically supported.

Then there is the matter of minority ethnic Anglicans (MEA) and the Church's failure to be inclusive and representative. There have been some ten reports over three decades highlighting this exclusion and giving recommendations for actions that the Church of England could and should take to welcome MEA in their calling to serve. This history reinforces the concerns of many minority clergy and lay people - that the Church does not take this issue seriously. It is clear, despite the many convincing reports, action has been shamefully slow, recent statistics have revealed a decline in the number of MEA selected or indeed promoted within the Church. As a member of the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglicans Concerns (CMEAC), I too feel frustrated by the lack of progress and I realise it is now a matter for concerted effort by all of us to ensure the C of E truly represents all British people and Anglicans in particular, as the Bishop of Chelmsford said in July 2015 "...it is high time we woke out of our sleep and realise we are guilty of complacency and neglect...our multicultural society should find expression in a multicultural church..." My prayer is that we will not ever have to bring another report on this matter to General Synod and, more importantly, CMEAC will become a redundant committee.

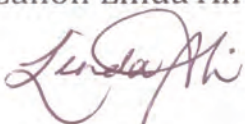
And this brings me to the present elections. My reason for wanting to stand as a candidate on this occasion is, among other things, to help to move on the debate concerning human sexuality. I am no theologian but I sincerely believe that we are being called to be the hands, feet and lips of our Lord, and to meet the people we serve where they are. In order to do so effectively we may have to update our language and attitude, and to make an even greater effort to listen to the voice of the people. Two thousand years ago Jesus said "*...I have much more to tell you, but now it would be too much for you to bear...*" (John 16:12). Perhaps these words have particular relevance today. Jesus is speaking to us, urging us to continue to grow his unconditional love. No one should be treated as an outcast. We are called to be inclusive, building upon the example set by our Lord during His ministry on earth.

I would be happy to discuss these issues with you if you would like to contact me by email: linda@jj26.fsnet.co.uk

I do hope that you will be able to give me your support once again to serve the Diocese of York for another term.

Thank you and God bless you

Canon Linda Ali

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Linda Ali', written in a cursive style.