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General Synod Elections 2021 – Address

I would first like to thank all the electors who have voted for me over the past 15 years giving me an opportunity to serve our Diocese of York on General Synod (GS). The GS, as a representative gathering of the Church involving bishops, clergy and laity, is a legislative body considering and approving legislation affecting the whole of the Church of England, locally, nationally and globally.

The Church of England is set to face many challenges in the next **Quinquennium**, namely finances, racial justice, same-sex relationships, safeguarding and the climate emergency.

Our Giving

Against a background of falling participation and most parishes operating on depleted incomes, in many cases payments received are below budget. Although all is not lost with the Parish Giving Scheme promising to bring improvement in weekly giving. We must not fail to remember the generosity of the churches in Macedonia in their giving even though they were poor and experiencing difficult times. They were willing to collaborate and support each other. (2 Cor: 8). This is an example for us today as we are called to recognise the benefits we have received from God's harvest. In this post-pandemic era, we can do no better than follow their example to go further by collaborating with our neighbouring deaneries/parishes for the benefit of the majority.

On a positive note, we are faced with a great many people, young and old, eager to engage with church life as found during the pandemic many attended live-streamed and zoom services. I believe we must not lose these 'new' members and it is down to us as to the extent we are prepared to respond to the call to 'Live Christ's Story'.

Unjust Structures

Young people have drawn our attention to the many unjust structures existing in society by their active involvement in social justice issues such as the climate emergency, homelessness, racial justice, sexual orientation, food poverty and social housing. The Church of England is trying to address the huge deficit in affordable housing. In its recent report "Coming Home" the Church is aiming to build affordable homes on its large land stock.

And this brings me to the present elections. I believe we are a fractured society. In a previous address I had hoped that we will not ever have to bring another report on the matter of racial justice to General Synod. Sadly, it was necessary to take a deeper look at this matter in the light of the brutal killing of George Floyd in the USA. We have not been exempt from unjust practices. Over many decades, the Church of England air-brushed people of colour from senior leadership roles within the Church. Not before

time, the work in which I was involved on CMEAC and TUTV*, and more recently the CNC Election Process Group, has begun to recognise the gifts of black and brown clergy/lay people. We have witnessed some changes in recent months with the “Lament to Action” Report calling for the Church to take ACTION and this has opened the way for a number of senior clergy and Bishops appointments across the country. (St Paul in Romans 12: says “we are many parts all belonging to the one body in Christ.”)

Hospitality/Generosity

The Church of England has responded to the worldwide Covid-19 vaccination programme through Covax. It is my wish that our generosity extends to the continuing support for this urgently needed immunisation programme for the global population.

As we witness the dislocation of peoples, I ask the question: how will the Church of England offer hospitality to our global neighbours forced to leave their countries namely Hong Kong and Afghanistan? I trust that we would be more hospitable to these newcomers and not make the same mistake as with the Windrush generation.

I believe my experience, among other things, as a Trustee of a Homeless charity in London, as a member of the Racial Equality Alliance in York, and more recently as a member of the Chapter of York Minster will be a positive contribution towards the work of General Synod. I trust this wide perspective will provide me with a realistic understanding of the issues facing the Church and what can be achieved in a post-pandemic changing world where many difficult decisions will need to be made.

It is my responsibility, if elected, to work towards a church which is generous, welcoming, inclusive and open to truly become Christ-centred. A church where every individual, every minority group would be able to fully participate in the life of the Church and in leadership roles of the Church of England.

I thank you in advance for reading my address and would be happy to discuss any of these issues with you if you would like to contact me by email: reez1743@gmail.com. I do hope that you will be able to give me your support once again to serve the Diocese of York for another term.

Many thanks in advance and may God bless you.

Yours sincerely,

Linda

Canon Linda Ali

*CMEAC - Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglicans Concern

TUTV - Turning Up the Volume