

**A
RESOURCE
ON
CULTURAL
SENSITIVITY
IN THE
ORDINATION PROCESS**



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The Office Ordained Ministry and Leadership Development
Ethnic Congregational Development: Asian, Black, Latino, Native American
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INTRODUCTION

In the most elementary form we can describe culture as: The way we do things around here.

- Jon Townsend

Culture is the shared set of assumptions, beliefs, values, behaviors, rituals, symbols, language and practices that give identity and solidity to a people. Culture is an on-going process, evolving and adapting to new challenges. It is not explicitly taught nor is effortlessly learned. It is absorbed in the process of socialization and strengthened and amplified in the course of lifelong incidental learning. It is the human-made side of the environment.

- Jerry Drino, adapted

Preface to the 2009 edition

A RESOURCE ON CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN THE ORDINATION PROCESS

Seldom do authors get a chance to revisit a work nearly two decades after being published to assess and revise the content of that were relevant in a previous period. Surprisingly the work we did in the early 1990s has maintained a remarkable “shelf life.” We attempted to transmit the passion and pain, the disappointments and the renewing hope of leaders in various ethnic communities who remain committed to the Church. Their journeys often have been difficult as they attempted to find a place at the table of leadership in the faith community they call home. 90% of what follows is the original text. Where updates occur they come from collective insights and refocusing. They that have arisen in nearly two decades of dialog, planning, training, and action within national and international communities committed to cultural diversity. For over four decades this leadership has seen our faith communities continue to move steadily from a mono-cultural Church to a growing vibrancy because of its diversity. We do not see these trends turning back. It has continued to intensify with some quite remarkable results where people have equipped themselves by becoming *cross-cultural competent*. In this revised edition we hope that the continued use of this Resource will help the Church grow on this mission trajectory. The Resource has now become a companion document with the publication of “Meeting on New Ground: Cultural Diversity in the Ordination Process” which can be found on-line at www.episcopalchurch.org/resources

- Jerry Drino

America has now stepped into a multi-cultural future as it finishes the first decade of a new century and millennium. The question and choice for the church is whether it will be inclusive or exclusive of the diversity of people existing in communities that populate any given diocese. Where it fails to respond to be inclusive the church will increasingly shift toward being a cultural enclave with little relevance to the surrounding world. The challenge for the church has to do with choices of mission and ministry and the identification, recruitment, and formation of leadership for the future.

This resource on cultural sensitivity meant to assist Bishops, Commissions on Ministry and Standing Committees in their servanthood of discernment and support for the future ministry of the church. The original document came from the voices of people in the many cultures that are woven into the Episcopal Church. There is frustration over the barriers that stand in the way of full support of leadership in these various communities. There is despair over the lack of affirmation of these leaders in the ordination process. How much these conditions have changed in nearly two decades must be answered diocese by diocese.

This resource is apart of the continuing response to the staff officers of the Ethnic Desks and of Ministry Develop of the Episcopal Church (TEC) who identified through successive terms the pressing need for the whole church to grapple with the issues of inclusion of all people in the life and leadership of the church. Since 1991 the General Conventions of the Episcopal Church have directed the Church Center staff and dioceses to become more intentional in cross cultural ministry development. The starting point is to become *cross-culturally competent*.

While the text focuses on ethnic sensitivity, the materials are equally applicable to circumstances related to gender and sexual orientation. Where ever there is an outsider to the norm there must be an intentional effort to open up the processes of inclusion to embrace the gifts that are waiting.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

Why is this needed? The 2000 United States Census reported that in ten of the largest cities in the country eight of them experienced a decline in the white population with only Phoenix and San Antonio experiencing less than a 5 percent increase in that demographic group.¹ The 1990 Census indicated that the heavy Hispanic and Asian immigrations had tipped the demographic balance in favor of what were called “minority groups” in most of the largest U.S. cities during the 1980s. Today these groups numerically are not minorities even though the cultural norms may maintain that social stereotype. In the last two decades the Hispanic and Asian population of twenty-two cities had dramatically shifted: New York from 47% to 57%, Houston from 47% to 59%, San Jose from 35% to 50%, and so the list goes on. In 1990 in California the projections indicated that the population would double and 4 out of 5 new residents would be either Hispanic or Asian by 2020. By 2000 these trends continued with Philadelphia experiencing well over 50% increase in the Hispanic/Asian population, with Phoenix seeing a 135% increase in Hispanics, San Diego seeing nearly 200% increase in the same population and Detroit finding a 75% increase in Hispanics. At the same time many urban centers found their Black and White populations shrinking. Rural areas across the country have been experiencing dramatic demographic shifts with schools finding over 50% of children living in homes where English is a second language. All this is reminiscent of a century and a half ago with the mass immigration began from Scandinavia, central and southern Europe. As we approach the 2010 Census many of the predictions of the 1992 version of this Resource will be validated.

¹ Sources: United States Census: 1990 and 2000, 2003 Census for New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Diego, Dallas, San Antonio, and Detroit.

During the past decades the rapid demographic shifts have produced a revolution at all levels of society. Today there is a training strategy for cultural sensitivity in every major corporation, school system and governmental agency. Executives and managers know that they cannot compete in a world market with the expectation that everyone think and act as white male Americans, the dominant paradigm of the past. Multi-cultural staffs and work forces will be hopelessly bogged down and counter-productive if growing cross cultural insights and sensitivity skills development are not firmly in place. Most colleges and universities now require courses in cultural awareness and multi-ethnic heritage for graduation. Questions of bi-lingual education have raged through our schools for three decades and are far from being answered. Barely a week goes by without some major magazine or journal devoting a lead article to issues of multi-culturalism. A whole publishing industry has been developed to meet the escalating needs for materials related to cultural sensitivity and models for inter-cultural relationships.

MISSION: A WINDOW FOR EVANGELISM

In the Space Age we have come to be accustomed to the terms like “window of availability” or “window of opportunity.” Turning these terms towards evangelism and mission, several questions can be asked: Where are the windows for evangelism today? Where is the Episcopal Church in relationship to these windows of opportunity? To be sure there are pockets of great creativity and visionary action taking place in our church. Several dioceses have had long standing mission and ministry with diverse populations. Some dioceses were created to be missionary dioceses among indigenous populations. The key to vital evangelism is how renewed in the Diocesan vision and ministry in the face of continuing shifts in demographics. The surveys that were done of dioceses two decades ago still present a challenge to our church.

What is happening in the neighborhoods is not reflected in many of the congregations of the Episcopal Church. There is a different reality, and an older paradigm that continues in the church. We do not see proportionate numbers of non-Euro-Americans moving into position of leadership. Why is this? If the present strategies for mission and ministry are not working, what are the alternatives for ministry development? Are we liable to continue to miss the window for evangelism, because we are still rooted in the paradigm of the past? This resource is a tool to answer these questions: Where are our windows of opportunity? How are we preparing ourselves with interpersonal skills of cross cultural competence? How essential are these skills in effectively transform the culture of the church – “the way we do things around here” – so that we can be the church at mission in the world?"

BACKGROUND OF THIS RESOURCE

In the 1980's the staff officers for the Ethnic Ministry desks of the Church Center traced the rapid migration shifts across the country.² They identified various strategies in their respective ethnic communities but noted that the pressing needs and opportunities belong to the whole Church. They brought these issues to the Council for the Development of Ministry (CDM) who

² Herbert Arrunategui (Hispanic), Owanah P. Anderson (Native American/Native Alaskan), Harold T. Lewis (Black), Winston W. Ching (Asian)

shared their concern. In 1990, John Docker, the staff officer for the CDM, approached the Coalition for Cross Cultural Ministry Development (CCMD)³ in Province VIII to consider researching and writing a resource to help the whole church address this challenge. Well over eighty languages are spoken in congregations of the Province VIII.

During 1990 - 1991 the research team listened to clergy and seminarians in various ethnic and racial communities from around the country. They talked candidly about their experiences in the ordination process and in the church. They shared how they first felt the call to be priests or deacons. They pointed to the people who supported them as well as those who tried to discourage them from entering the ordained ministry. They raised concerns about the state of the church and why it is not responding with imagination and energy to the diversity of people's in their midst. Suggestions were noted about how things could be different. It is their contributions that have formed the major substance of this Resource.

AN EVANGELISTIC EMERGENCY

The rapid demographic shifts that intensified in the mid-1970s initiated new challenges to the church which continues today. Some dioceses responded more quickly than others. But today diversity is a part of a mission planning strategy for in all denominations. In the late 1980s the Rt. Rev. Fred Borsch, then Bishop of Los Angeles, awakened his dioceses and Province VIII by pointing out that "One out of every 14 Americans now lives within the boundaries of the Diocese of Los Angeles. There are over 100 languages spoken in our schools. We are in an evangelistic emergency."

Yes, we are in an evangelistic emergency, an emergency that now stretches back over three decades. The revision of the Ministry Canons (Title III) now reflects the emergency instructing bishops and Commissions on Ministry to seek out, recruit and move persons into the formation process for ordination.

The persons we recruit and form for ordination will determine the form and shape of the mission and ministry of church in the future. If dioceses follow the old cultural paradigm they will choose people like themselves. There will be consistency and continuity. However, the demographics alone are driving us economically, socially, and politically to a very different world. We need to continue to find bold new ways of approaching ministry development. At the same time we need to develop cross-cultural competency at all levels of church leadership lest our blind spots and prejudice undermined our best intentions. The words of St. Paul need to be a constant reminder to us:

"For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very

³ CCMD was founded in 1986 by a joint action of General Convention and Province VIII. In 1991 it changed its name to InterCultural Ministry Development (ICMD) to be inclusive of more ethnic groups.

thing I hate...so that it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me.”⁴

THE SCOPE OF THE RESOURCE

Clergy Narratives

The heart of this resource is the stories of clergy and seminarians from various ethnic communities who have gone through the ordination process, sometimes at great personal and spiritual expense. They were engaged by the research team with questions of how their personal narrative offered differing insights concerning the ordination process to the church. They often describe procedures placed them under lens of the dominant culture defined by the white male experience. They painted pictures of the struggle and often unseen price of being in such a position. Their voices could be multiplied a hundred fold. They pointed to the barriers that need to be taken seriously in every diocese. As we revise this Resource we give thanks for all the ministries of the participants in this research but especially for those who have died in the intervening years.

Cross Cultural Communications

Removing barriers is not a simple task as we are reminded by St. Paul in his letter to the Romans (7.15). There are deep unconscious forces that bind us to our prejudices. Transforming the cultural paradigm of the Episcopal Church at each levels means "changing the way we do things around here."⁵ The ordination process can not be addressed in a vacuum. Each encounter in the process from congregation, to clergy, to Bishop, to Commission on Ministry, to Standing Committee requires an expanded consciousness the cultural dynamics that are in play between people as they communicate. Many skills and perceptions are needed to ensure that the way things are done around the church moves into transformation. Several core considerations are presented as basic tools for cross-culturally competency.

Cultural Norms

The use of the concept *paradigm*⁶ is helpful because it refers to a closed cultural system, the content of which is expressed in norms - "the way we do things around here." For the purpose of this study we need to look at the particular Anglo-Saxon American heritage the dominant cultural paradigm root in much of the church in the United States. Of course there are regional exceptions, especially in indigenous communities, and in the thirteen other national churches in

⁴ Romans 7:15 NIV I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

⁵ John Townsend, Cross-Cultural Consultant

⁶ Paradigm: a set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them, especially in an intellectual discipline.

the TEC.⁷

Racism

We cannot avoid looking at the issue of racism whose social construct intentionally was shaped by the dominant culture over three centuries into the paradigm, starting with colonial settlers. However, it does not help to engender guilt or pass judgment on previous generations. We can only deal with who we are in the present moment as inheritors of sorry history. Therefore, an open understanding of the dynamics of racism is presented in this study. If we fail to face this collective cancer we will fail to see where the barriers have been and are in the church. This is the “sin” which St. Paul refers to in Romans 7. *Sin* in the Hebrew is an archery term which means *to miss the mark*. We will continue to miss the mark unless we take ownership of our spiritual and cultural inheritance with a thorough, continuing and fearless in-depth look at the historic, social, economic and political norms infected with racism that shape the present. Only as we claim who we have been as a church and society can we alter the conditions that have prevented a fuller expression of leadership from all ethnic and racial groups that see themselves as members of the church..

Implications for Commissions on Ministry and Standing Committees

With an understanding of cultural norms and racism as a background we then move on to the consideration of Commissions on Ministry, and by implication Standing Committees, in the process of identifying, interviewing, and nurturing persons in the ordination process.

The Appendix

There are two case studies from the Diocese of Los Angeles that were presented in the 1992 publication of this Resource. Both have evolved in their local context over the past two decades. Many other resources are now available, expanding some of this pioneering work which are cited in Meeting on New Ground: Cultural Diversity in the Ordination Process.⁸

- Alternative Training Model (Pg 55) presents the process initiated by the Rt. Rev. Frederick Borsch in the Diocese of Los Angeles under the guidance of the Hispanic Missioner, The Rev. Canon Carmen Guerrero. The normative pattern of preparation for ordination has been a three year residential seminary education. Los Angeles in conjunction with Pacific Lutheran Seminary in Berkeley, California developed an alternative track. Since 1992 several other dioceses have launched equivalent tracks which were needed as a commitment to move towards greater inclusivity in ordained leadership.

⁷ The Episcopal Church (TEC) is comprised of fourteen national jurisdictions. The term “National Church” which appeared in the 1992 publication has been changed to refer specifically to the United States.

⁸ **Meeting on New Ground: Cultural Diversity in the Ordination Process** (Church Publishing Co, 2007 and on-line at http://www.episcopalchurch.org/1521_58665_ENG_HTML.htm?menupage=31619) provides expanded resources on various models for diocesan strategies and the ordination process

- A Diocesan Strategy (Pg 59) was written by the Ven. Hartshorn Murphy, then Archdeacon for Mission in the Diocese of Los Angeles. His reflections came from his extensive experience in the mission planning, mentoring and evaluation but also from years of dialog and strategy development as convener of the Network of Archdeacons and Missioner in InterCultural Ministry Development of Province VIII.

UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS:

As we listened to the stories and responses to the research the following principles kept reoccurring. These will be discussed more fully in the chapters of this Resource:

- **One Time is Not Enough.** Ensuring institution transformation requires a sustained effort over many years. Sociologist would say that ten years at a minimum is required for real, sustainable change to take place. Therefore, a single workshop of this Resource or similar materials will not be sufficient to change the culture of the church. Institutionalizing a regular series of training, action and reflection events on diversity is essential. Hard work is required to get the heart of any spiritual distortion. The cultural exclusion of members of our society from the church and its leadership is a deep spiritual cancer that must be attended to with great seriousness. Resistance will be met on all sides. New people will come into positions of authority and leadership who must go through the same spiritual transformation. It should not be underestimated how easy it is to return the culture of a group to its previous position with the inclusion of enough new people carrying the old infection from the previous norms. To not pay attention to this possibility will ultimately reverse the progress that has been made by the current leadership.
- **Anglo-Saxon Cultural Heritage Dominance.** The Anglo-Saxon inheritance is the primary culture dynamic of Episcopal Church in the United States.⁹ Often with as much resistance as we find today towards new comers German, Dutch and French began to be included in our church after the Revolutionary War. The process was primarily that of assimilation into the core cultural norms of the English traditions.¹⁰ The longer original

⁹ Note: This is a broad statement with the following qualifications: The various indigenous faith communities are a blend of both the Anglo-Saxon ethos of the missionaries and the adaptation of these norms with their own faith traditions. This is true for the African American communities in the U.S. In addition there are thirteen other national Churches that make up the Episcopal Church administered from the U.S whose cultural roots are a blend of the Anglo-Saxon missionary ethos and the various Hispanic, French, Pacific Island, and Asian cultures of which they are a part.

¹⁰ The Minutes of the General Conventions of the early 1800s note the debate over whether former German Lutherans should be included in the Episcopal Church. When the bishops and clergy siding with revolution of Mexico (then from Panama to Wyoming) in 1821 petitioned the General Convention to be received they were turned down because the House of Bishops could not conceive of a bilingual house with dark skinned bishops.

Native American and later African American ministries were to developed adaptations of the dominant cultural norm, but were marginalized and little or no voice in the church. The basic assumptions and values operative in the church lie deep within our ecclesial culture even though today there are congregations and leaders in the church from numerous non-Anglo-Saxon backgrounds.¹¹ Cultural norms are like the air we breathe. They are so close to us that we cannot even recognize their presence and influence.

- **Accommodation not assimilation.** *Assimilation* in the church has come to mean that if others are to be acceptable *they must behave as we do*. This is not cross cultural ministry development. The challenge to the church is to find a new ways of being the Body of Christ whose inclusive nature accommodates the diversity of cultures and peoples with whom we are called to engage in mission and ministry. The operative word is “called,” indicating intentionality. Two changes must be embraced by members of the church. First, the carriers of the dominant culture must recognize the “blessing and curse” of their a position. For they are the “cultural gate keeper.” Second, change will occur when they recognize the barriers created by any dominant culture. A genuine new community is possible only if authentic partnerships exist with both those currently at the center and those at the margins. This is *accommodation* which will lead to transformation of the culture of the church. The hoped for results will be the new wine which requires new wine skins which Jesus spoke about.¹² The marks of such a community will be interdependence, mutual respect and shared accountability as the culture evolves into a *new creation*, according to St. Paul.¹³
- **The Power of Individual Awareness.** Community transformation begins by individuals discovering and identifying their own cultural norms and dynamics. This is easier said than done. If we live most of our lives in a mono-cultural environment we have no other persons with whom we interact demonstrating that there are other ways of seeing and experiencing reality. If we are members of the dominant culture then we are will often be insulated from knowing there are differences. If we have been born into a minority position, or became a minority through some change, then we know that the assumptions, norms and rules of society vary depending on your position of power, status and heritage. You are by nature bi-cultural. If cultural norms are kept unconscious in the dominant class they will act autonomously to distort our perceptions, leading to misunderstandings, discrimination and even conflict. You cannot remain unconscious if you are a minority. However, you can easily develop a victim-complex which will equally distort your perception of others. The first step in moving towards cross cultural sensitivity is to take

¹¹ As of 2009 it is estimated that nearly a hundred languages are spoken in the various congregations of TEC.

¹² **Matthew 9:17 NIV** Neither do men pour **new** wine into old **wineskins**. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the **wineskins** will be ruined. No, they pour **new** wine into **new wineskins**, and both are preserved

¹³ 2 Corinthians 5:17

a thorough and fearless inventory of our self, our culture dynamics and any privileges we may gain from this position.

- 4) **Cross Cultural Competence.** Becoming culturally competent should be a goal for all leadership within the church. We vowed at our baptism, and in our frequent reaffirmations, to “seek and serve Christ in all persons.”¹⁴ The developmental process of becoming culturally competent reveals five core values:
 - 1) Valuing diversity;
 - 2) Having the capacity for cultural self-assessment;
 - 3) Being conscious of the dynamics inherent when members of cultures interact;
 - 4) Having knowledge of the culture of the particular institution, i.e the Church;
 - 5) Having personally developed adaptations to diversity.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

The Resource provides the opportunity for discussion among bishops and members of Commissions on Ministry, Standing Committees, and Departments of Mission. A joint or series of workshops, retreats, or conferences could be developed using the Resource as the content. At the end of each section there are questions as discussion starters. A design team should be appointed to plan and lead the workshop and then evaluate its effectiveness for future events. Here is a minimal suggestion for the use of this Resource which could be expanded to longer formats:

Set aside 30 minutes in sequential meetings to discuss the subject matter of each section. Invite clergy and lay leaders from various ethnic and racial communities to tell their story related to these topics. Allow this involvement to be an intentional step in moving the diocese a broad dialog and intentional strategic action towards greater inclusiveness.

Plan for an annual in-service training event and provide for an orientation process whereby anyone new to the board or committee goes through the entire orientation. With out that then once the rotation of persons has gone one round no one will have the background of this material.

Use it in a loose-leaf format and add your own materials that are relevant to your situation - models, questions and concerns. See this Resource as a catalyst for building subsequent in-service training for old and new members. Celebrate the benefit of on-going dialogue.

Do not let the commitment die after one reading. Identify and encourage those

¹⁴ Book of Common Prayer, page 305

persons as leaders who will keep this discussion going at all levels of the diocese. Transformation of cultural norms that have been in place for four to five hundred years cannot be accomplished over night. Establish in the calendar a year in-service training for new and continuing members.

No one should mistake this resource as being a comprehensive study on the subject of cultures, communications and transformation of the church in the ordination process.

A Companion Resource: In 2007 Meeting on New Ground: Cultural Diversity in the Ordination Process was published after gathering two decades of experience of bishops, dioceses and congregations in the challenge to become a diverse Church. This English and Spanish written resource comes with a bi-lingual DVD and is available through the Church Publishing Company or on line at the Episcopal Church web site:

http://www.episcopalchurch.org/1521_58665_ENG_HTM.htm?menupage=31619

A bibliography has been provided for further reading.

NOTE ON LANGUAGE

The study of cross cultural communications is very fluid. Consequently, the use of terms to describe people and relationships is in flux and will continue to vary. Since 1992 the use of descriptive terms has and continues to change. For example, “race” and “racial” is only used in this Resource as a direct quote or in reference to this historical practice of exclusion. “Hispanic” is now decline or has ceased to be use for those persons and communities whose cultural roots are in former Spanish colonies in the U.S., Mexico, Central and South America. Subsequently, the term “Latino” is now more in play. Likewise, the terms ‘white, American Anglo-Saxon, Caucasian, Euro-American” may all refer to the same personal heritage with “White” now being the common usage. American Indian is giving way Native American, Native Hawaiian, Native Alaskan, First Nations or Indigenous People. For those of African descent there is a pendulum movement between Black, African American, and in the church Afro-Anglican. Asian is non-descriptive of any group because of the numerous Asian countries of origins for the ministries of TEC. All terms of cultural descriptions are grossly inadequate to communicate the specific heritage and experience of person of any one group.¹⁵

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 1992 John Docker, then Coordinator for Ministry Development, was cited initiating this project. Carmen Guerrero and Hartshorn Murphy, then on the staff of the Diocese of Los Angeles were collaborator as with as the design team. The then ethnic staff of the Church Center

¹⁵ A standard expression is not the intention of this Resource. The reader will note that the need for standardization is a deeply held Anglo-Saxon norm which will be discussed in the third section: Cultural Norms.

were Herbert Arrunategui, Winston Ching, Harold Lewis, and Owanah Anderson together with Carol Hampton who gave input into the formulation of the Resource. There were bishops serving then in Province VIII were most of the research took place whose sustained commitment to diversity in the 90s gave leadership to the whole church building on previous bishops of their diocese. Among those bishops were Fred Borsch and Olie Garver of Los Angeles; Harry Kennedy, Ed Browning and Don Hart of Hawaii; Bill Gordon, David Cochran, and George Harris of Alaska; Wes Frensdorf and Steven Plummer of Navajoland. Among the other advisors recognized in 1992 for their input and reading the text were Jon Townsend (Creek) Director of Cascade Alternative Resolution Services and a member of Four Winds Indian Ministry in Portland, Oregon; James Manning, Chairman of the Provincial Black Commission and Caryl Marsh, Rector of St. Paul's, Salt Lake City. All of them read the text thoroughly from both a bi-cultural point of view and technical content making many helpful suggestions. Most importantly we thanked the clergy and seminarians who opened their lives to the research team. We were changed because of them. We no longer travel around the church without asking the same questions that we posed in our research. The stories are all too painfully present. Because of this work we have been privileged to be apart of many other projects seeking to enable to church to grow into its potential with the full Body of Christ from “every family, language, people and nation.”¹⁶

We hope the church will listen in each diocese to the voices of those who have been called by God and their communities to the ordained ministry but remain on the periphery. Open the doors and let them in.

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Together with

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Canon Missioner, Diocese of Arizona

Former Director of Jubilee Ministries of the Episcopal Church

Former Canon for Mission, Diocese of Los Angeles

Hartshorn Murphy

Rector of St. Augustine's-by-the-Sea, Santa Monica

Former Archdeacon for Mission, Diocese of Los Angeles

¹⁶ Revelation 5:9-10

CLERGY NARRATIVES ON THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THE ORDINATION PROCESS

The research for this resource was conducted in gatherings of clergy and seminarians from around Province VIII to discuss the project. Nearly eighty languages are spoken in this province which covers eleven time zones and a third the surface of the earth, mostly water. A sampling of their responses is found below. They describe their callings and the journeys of courage and determination, constant reassessment of vision for their future place in the church and the anguish that they met along the way. Their statements give insight into the ordination process from interviews, seminary experiences, examinations for ordination and the realities of deployment that often have been limiting and frustrating. Between the lines they point to the potential for a transformed church of the future.

No names are included because anonymity was essential. The following statements come from American Indians, Native Hawaiians, Africans, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latino American priests, deacons and seminarians. Additional stories and comments were collected by Winston Ching, Herbert Arrinategui and Carol Hampton and are woven into later sections.

We began with this prayer:

O God, the Creator of time and space, of land and all your creatures, we, members of your human Creation come before you: renew the fire of Baptism that brought us into Ministry; enliven the presence of the people with whom we serve and the larger work in which we are engaged; help us to be visionaries, to see your new and evolving patterns in all of life; help us to be authentic; guide us by your Spirit, that what we begin here may be of benefit to this diocese and the whole of your Church. All this we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord and your Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

What is the essence of any ministry?

A Latino priest:

Ministry, our ministry and any kind of ministry, is based on our love. If we believe that God is love...then our ministry is enormous, because His love and ours are joined together. We cannot do all the ministry that has to be done. There is something that happens when we bring people from their own environment, from their own cultural traditions into this community of love. Somewhere in every culture it is the special dream of people to develop ministry, even though they may use other words. It is God's dream in them. To develop ministry is to know that there are people who are willing to

work because they know the dream, God's dream for them.

Where does ministry begin?

[For some people in the dominant society, which has seen themselves as the source of mission for three hundred years, it is difficult to imagine that the Church, being formed and existing in other cultures possesses a vital sense of mission.]

An African-American priest:

Ministry begins with my recognizing my own needs so that I can also see the needs in others. I begin with the spiritual fact that I cannot live alone. I have needs and there are people around me that have needs and I can't live in isolation. I feel called to serve the needs of others even though the church so often has been asleep or looking the other way. At times I have had to convince the church that it had need of my ministry.

A Latino-American priest:

People are seeking peace and rest for their souls and the church can be a symbol of how you can come back to a right relationship with God and be at peace.

A Native-American priest:

It is quite simple. People have needs. There are problems of addiction and loss. The church is there to be with people, to show them that they are not abandoned. This is what we are supposed to do.

A Latino-American priest:

All of us who are minorities must ask the question "Why should we want to be a part of a denomination that historically refused to allow our people to be a part of them when they first came to our countries?" They brought the church for themselves. We are now prevailing. We have entered in. We want a fuller part in the leadership.

Where did your call begin?

In response to the ordination process we noted that most clergy felt the call in their early teens. Often times it was a priest or member of the family that encouraged them forward. It is significant to note that clergy from within their own ethnic community often discouraged young people from offering themselves for the ordained ministry:

An Asian American priest:

In the congregation I grew up in the models for ministry were the clergy. I decided that I wanted to be priest to serve within my ethnic group. I talked to my vicar and several other Asian priests. They all told me not to get involved in ethnic ministries because I would get stuck. I think that those are generational differences, but then I have not tried to get a job on the open market, yet. These priests were barriers to me.

Another barrier was my diocese's open policy on ordination at that time. Anyone could go through, but there was no promise for a position at graduation. Since ethnic ministries

never seem to be a high priority, there was little chance of my working in that diocese.

An Asian-American priest:

I don't think I would make it today. There are too many barriers that I would be looking at if I were a young person who had a sense of vocation. In my day, before COMs and long interviews with Standing Committees, it was the bishop who did the recruiting. My bishop was fabulous. He started identifying us when we were at diocesan camps in early high school. Most of the time he didn't even give us a choice. He just said, "I want you to be a priest!" Now the process has become too bureaucratic. When it comes to minorities, who has the sensitivity to advocate for their vocation?

An African-American priest:

In this diocese it is not a race problem, it is a class problem. If you are in the right class you can be included. If you have a college degree and don't embarrass others, you are in. COMs need to look at the cultural norms that underlie their assumptions, what they expect of people being interviewed and consider how diverse they really envision what a future Church wants to embrace. However, I do not see that we are willing to change the whole game plan to be inclusive.

An Asian American priest:

I had to stop being Asian in order to learn how to be a Caucasian and go through the process. When you begin to be assimilated into the Caucasian community there is a fear that you are losing your ethnic identity, because your identity (culture and ethnicity) is not acceptable. Since I was in another profession before being ordained, it is not just the church that has the problem. In making the sacrifices to be acceptable you lose touch with your heritage and it takes a while to get back. It is not made easy for you. You have to change your whole way of thinking, behaving, in order to fit in, in order to make progress in the white world.

What was seminary like?

Seminary experiences were most often set within Euro-American academic theological traditions and norms. The reactions were mixed.

A Native American Priest:

I would not have missed seminary for anything. It gave me an experience of how the larger world functions and an opportunity to know that I could be a part of it. The *experience* was the important thing, but I would be hard put to say how some of the classes helped me in my ministry.

A Latino-American seminarian:

I would say there were things I could have found helpful which were not available to me. For instance, in seminary we were exposed to presentations by "highly successful" clergy who told us what they did to build up their congregations. The only experience I had of Hispanic ministry was my work placement: a struggling mission with limited resources and little in the way of program for its congregation. I have no sense of what one would

need to succeed in such a place.

In seminary I needed to be offered the opportunity to develop a positive Hispanic identity. As a bi-cultural person, I saw a choice between two distinct identities: one as a successful priest (Anglo), the other as a struggling priest in an uncertain environment, a marginal ministry (Hispanic). These are stereotypes. I wish I would have had the opportunity to be exposed to a more complete picture.

An African American priest:

Facing racism in seminary was going back to where I'd never been before. I'd never experienced racism so deeply as I had at seminary. In going through college or in high school nothing was like what I experienced there. Through three years of seminary I watched the minority students drop out one by one.

How did racism manifest itself in seminary? Being told that you are different. There was a sense of a patronizing attitude and even being called "boy". I had never been called that in my life. There were a series of subtle things that tell you that you are outside of the system, the mainstream. Anglo students and faculty assume that they can't relate to you and others who are different than themselves.

An African American priest:

I am convinced that seminary training, as we have done it traditionally, operates out of an educational model that doesn't fit. We are training people for a world that no longer exists and for a church, if it still exists, that should be closed. If this is true for white's who have endowments funds to carrying on a folk-memory of what the church used to be, then it is doubly a problem for minorities who do not have these resources to "play church." This model is irrelevant to the world in which they live. We need to look at the whole issue of residential training verses formation within the context of ministry.

What about deployment?

Deployment is the great stumbling block. In many cases there are only a handful of congregations within any ethnic group that are open to ethnic clergy. For clergy identified with one ethnic community there still is seldom a successful bid for a call within a white or multi-cultural parish.

An African-American Priest:

For minority people my experience in the church has been so painful. There are so many other opportunities in America today for minorities that I don't want to commend the (ordained) ministry to young people. These children should be doctors, lawyers. I don't want them to be low status, low paid professionals with no real future. In the past you knew you weren't going any place as a priest, so you made the best of it. It was a closed racist system and you learned to function in it.

A Latino-American priest:

We must look both at theological education, but also at the models of the church. The

church has stressed conformity to a handful of models for the sake of ease in management. But the complexities of modern society present a very different reality of great diversity. Both the cultural diversity and the generational issues render a mono-cultural church-model virtually obsolete. The church tends not to want to deal with diversity beyond a relatively safe limit. They say to us, "Be like us and then you can enter in." This resource should challenge the local diocese as broad as possible and let them determine how to use it.

A Native American Priest:

The son of a priest in another diocese graduated from college and was offered a salary that is three times larger than what his father is making after twenty-five years in the ministry.

Discouragement

The following experience was related by an Asian American priest, but is echoed in every cultural group.

I remember during by 8th or 9th grade years saying to my priest, "You know, I feel very strong about being a priest." He said, "You don't want to be a priest." I said, "What?" He said, "You don't want to be a priest. It is not that easy." You know for someone to say to a teenager, you don't want to do this...it is like a challenge. so an inner voice said to me, "Well, OK. You think you can do better than him. Go ahead and try."

Liberal Institutional Racism

Finally, discrimination is hidden below the surface in the very act of trying to become culturally sensitive:

An African-American Priest:

I remember the General Convention in Detroit (1988). The Agenda Committee brought in Blacks from outside of the Church to educate the bishops and deputies on Black culture and the impact of racism. They totally ignored the fact that we have been in this Church for over 300 years. Does our experience have any value?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

(Suggested process: Move into groups of 6 to 8 people. Allow each person to respond to the question as the leader asks them in sequence without interruption or interpretation from others. In the last two question open the discussion up for general conversation.)

- Which statements moves you and why?
- Which statement do you most take issue with?
- How might your response be rooted in your cultural heritage?
- From our responses what challenges do we face in our own ordination process?
- What issues are raised in these statements that you hope will be addressed in this resource?

CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS

One of the greatest stumbling blocks to understanding other peoples within or without a particular culture is the tendency to judge other's behavior by our own standards.

James Downs, *Cultures in Crisis*

CONTEXT OF PRESENT NEED: THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

In the past most people were born, lived, and died within a limited geographical area, never encountering people of other ethnic and/or cultural backgrounds. In the 1970's Marshall McLuhan described our world as becoming a "global village" because of the accelerated development of the communications industry. A century ago only metropolitan areas in our country had a diverse cultural population. With the phenomenon of world wide migration now thousands of communities have become global villages. In many of these cities and towns it is quite common to encounter 10 to 20 different cultural or ethnic groups within a few blocks of where one lives. In 1990 the Census revealed that the population of 22 metropolitan areas had a population of over 50% minorities. The term "minority" is fortunately beginning to lose its meaning in our common language. To persist in using it constitutes a clear symptom of institutional racism. A whole profession of cross cultural consultancy has arisen in the last ten years, whose primary concern is the development of effective cross cultural communication among employees, faculty and students. If the environments of industry and education are concerned with cultural sensitivity, then we as the church need to asses our own household.

THE CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH

Ethnocentric Assumptions: Effective inter-cultural communications requires awareness of the assumptions of own cultural norms, the non-verbal communication clues, the historic inter-relationships with ethnic groups including current "social position" – the study of where one group stands in relationship to other groups in the hierarchy of power. Here are some examples of the experience of silence in inter-cultural communications

A bishop came to visit one of the Native American communities of his diocese. A group gathers to meet him. He is somewhat uncomfortable because this is a new cultural setting for him. He soon becomes engaged in conversation with one or two people. Sitting silently in the room is a Native scholar who has much to offer of insight into his people's religious concerns. The bishop has not met this man and knows nothing of his background. The bishop's culture rewards those

who initiate conversation and can easily verbalize their ideas. His initial anxiety is diminished and he believes that he is receiving the necessary information that he has sought. Gradually he has ceased to notice anyone else. After an hour the scholar leaves, feeling that the bishop is too busy. The likelihood of the two men meeting again is not high.

WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

First, there was a missed opportunity for both the bishop and Native scholar. The bishop operating out of his own extroverted cultural dynamic engaged in a conversation with those who made him feel at home. The Native scholar on the other hand was present in a traditional Native mode whose patterns begins in silence as the two or more people settle into the relationship of their shared space. From this "settled place" a conversation could begin.

Second, there was a misreading or misinterpretation on the part of both persons which began to multiply. The verbal and non-verbal cues were not recognized. The bishop did not inquire discretely as to who was in the circle. The scholar did not recognize the anxiety of the bishop in this setting. When we relate to people of our own culture there is the high possibility that we are usually able to pick up certain non-verbal cues and "read between the lines". If the bishop had been a part of the Native culture he would have probably become instinctively aware others silently sitting in the room, not because they were there out of idle curiosity but because they had something to say. If the Native scholar had been able to see through the talkative "White man" to realize this was a sign of insecurity he might have ventured to break through in some way. As it turned out the bishop became more and more animated in his conversation with the two informants and the Native scholar retreated further and further into his silence.

Third, the issue of social power and history played a part here. Who possessed the relational power in this situation? The bishop. Who possessed the cultural power in this situation? The answer is mixed. From the Native perspective there might be deference given to the bishop who is the chief pastor. He also comes from the dominant culture whose historic actions robbed the Native peoples of their land and much of their culture including their religious traditions. However, from the stand point of the bishop, the cultural power might have been on the Native side whereby the bishop wanting to reconcile the cultures was attempting to defer to that Native leaders while the Native scholar was pulling back into the security of silence which had been the adapted way of surviving.

When we are communicating with a person from another culture we must recognize that there will be cultural differences and that misinterpretation is almost inevitable.

One Asian-American priest spoke of waiting five years before the White rector of the parish asked him to consider studying in seminary. Both knew that the Asian-American leader had a vocation, but the rector read the silence of layman to be disinterest in pursuing ordination. The layman on the other hand assumed that the priest was not supportive of his calling. He was operating out of a cultural background which holds that the individual must be invited by someone in authority to speak or invite into a process. Culturally it is inappropriate to be openly assertive. One does not want to risk being seen as arrogant and taking the chance to lose face if

rejected. The rector on the other hand operated out of his cultural norms, interpreting the shyness of the man as lacked initiative. This raised the question of suitability for priesthood even though the man was a central leader in the parish.

UNCONSCIOUS BEHAVIOR

Much of what makes up communication happens at an unconscious level. The roots of misunderstanding were probably barely conscious to the participants in the two stories. No one asked what the silence meant in both cases. Each person operated with a different set of assumptions. It is possible that no one knew that a cross cultural conflict going on.

WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Symbols in Communications: Communication is an immense topic with hundreds of variables to consider. Since discernment of vocations is highly personal, for the sake of our study a beginning definition is that *communication is the making known to another person or group something about our own life*. To be human includes the desire and ability to communicate. The tools by which we communicate are *symbols*: words, inflections in our voice, facial expressions, gestures, punctuated silences and written or graphic physical representations. In the church the nature of sacramental theology, the encounter between the Sacred and human, can only be revealed through symbol. When symbols are present, either being used consciously, or unconsciously, we say that they are the outward and visible signs of something that is hidden yet within our being and Creation. If we try to communicate something that is vital, then we will take great pains to be sure of the precision of our words or some other symbolic carriers of this vital “something.” Conversely, a threatening situation will make us guarded because the symbols in the environment are experienced as negative and we will withhold what really is in our heart.

CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS

Non-verbal cues: When relating with people of our own culture there is a higher possibility that we will be able to pick up certain non-verbal cues and "read between the lines." However, this is not always true. At times even after years our closest friends and members of our family can remain an enigma to us leading to misunderstanding. If this can happen with people of our own background, the complexities will multiply when we enter into cross-cultural communications.

Communication, the sending and receiving of messages, is highly influenced by culture.

A Latina-American priest remembers being asked to talk about *her* ministry before a Commission on Ministry. She could not find the words in English to make a response. She had never thought about her vocation as *her* ministry. *Ministry* had always been *our* ministry. This question so blocked her responses that she could say only a few words to any of the other questions. She was asked to come back in a year when she had a clearer sense of what she wanted. The real challenge was to understand the cultural assumptions of the interviewing process from another culture. The initial experience was painful and

confusing. She had a clear sense of calling that was supported by his community. This community had nominated her to both the diocesan missionary and bishop for ordination who were impressed with her maturity and leadership ability. They saw her to be a potential priest. However, the concept of ministry within Latino culture is based on community response and activity, not individualistic calling. The American Anglo-Saxon cultural norms, to be discussed later, begin with a focus on the individual and her or his activity in the community.

The story reveals a conflict of cultural understandings. The members of the Commission on Ministry were looking for signs of a vocation from within their own dominant American Anglo-Saxon norms. The nominee was being called and recruited from a Latino faith community who recognized her leadership and spiritual maturity. A year later when she returned both sides had done some learning out of the initial difficult interview. One member of the Commission asked, "We know that community is very important. Tell us about your community." The nominee possessed a new set of cross-cultural skills and could speak with animation. With mounting enthusiasm she began to talk about the vision for mission and ministry which she shared with the people. Then at one point the Commission member asked "Can you tell us where your life fits into this vital ministry?" The Commission had no trouble seeing her potential for becoming a priest. There was pain in losing a year for her community and for herself. The sobering sorrow lies is rooted in the question of how many other persons have been turned away from the ordination process because there was a cultural conflict in communication.

COMMUNICATION AND CATEGORIES

When we encounter someone from a different cultural or ethnic background we immediately begin to arrange our responses and reactions into groups of perceptions that are shaped often by unexamined assumptions. *This is the process of categorization.* Categorization is a natural and universal process. Our brains require organizing experiences and information into groupings or categories in order to process the information. If we had to consciously decide on every new experience we would go insane. This automatic process cannot be avoided. Categorization creates *perception filters* through which we order life. Such a process can be non-rational involving little or no choice. Without knowing it a pre-judgment occurs, attempting to predict the other person's nature or behavior. Categories forms the basis of our assumptions when we communicate and can remain unconscious unless challenged

The first step in cross cultural communication is to know that we are always putting people into categories, whether they are accurate perceptions or not. To deny that our perceptions might not be accurate is to leave us no options to correct these perceptions. We are driven by our unconscious categories. We then remain in the condition St. Paul described: *I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.*¹⁷

¹⁷ Romans 7:15

A Latino-American postulant relates a story of speaking before a group of clergy and laity from several dioceses about evangelism within the Latino community. After several questions he stopped answering in mid-sentence and said, "Correct me if I am wrong, but I have a strong feeling that when you think of Latinos you are thinking of farm workers, undocumented and illiterate aliens." This silenced the whole gathering. He knew that they were not seeing him. A few people admitted for the majority that this was the perception (category) in which they had placed Latinos. The postulant U.S. born, holds two masters degrees from American universities and is a successful social worker. But the gathered church leaders saw before them an illiterate farm worker. If we do not recognize the process of categorization then we will have no way to challenge its ethnocentricity.

The second step is to reflect upon the content of our categories for each culture or ethnic group we encounter. We may or may not have had extensive experience with persons of other cultures or ethnic groups. By being human we will have developed a range of categories from highly desirable to undesirable traits for many cultures. These may or may not be rooted in any accurate sense of reality. None-the-less, they unconsciously act as filters through which we relate to the other person. He is a parallel story to one mentioned above.

A priest, who had served a mono-cultural congregation was called to be rector of a large multi-cultural parish. He was enthused about this new calling. The leadership he inherited was appropriately mixed ethnically. However, within few years almost everyone from Vestry to Sunday School teachers were White. He grew uneasy at this development and a leading Asian lay woman what was going on. She said, "It is not within our culture to volunteer. We are taught as children not to put our selves forward. It is the community or the person in authority that must call us forward." The priest's perceptual categories of Asians, based on little actual experience, assumed that they were passive. He looked at the Asian parishioners through these filters, gradually letting them be excluded from leadership. The cultural context from which the Asian-Americans in the congregation operated led them to believe that Whites like to act with unilateral authority and that the priest would ask them to help. When he did not make such a move, then their older experiences of racism surfaced and turned them from the rector. Out of the conversation between priest and laywoman a task force was set-up to recruit leaders from amongst the non-White members. Within a couple of years a balance of leadership was restored.

It is important for each of us to become aware of the content we carry of the categories of different ethnic and cultural groups. Our life experience will show us where these perceptions are in error if we have the sensitivity recognize that they are acting as barriers to seeing more fully the other person.

STEREOTYPES

There is a principle which is a bar against all accurate information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man or woman in everlasting ignorance - that principle is contempt prior to investigation.

□□□

- Herbert Spencer

The word “contempt” is not too soft a word to describe the resistance that can be in some people to become conscious of their blind spots. It is inevitable that an unexamined set of perceptual categories will result in stereotypes. Because categories are non-rational, the filters forming an impression of another person are *unlikely* to focus objectively on that person’s trait. The filters, which are highly influenced by inherited cultural stereotypes, create an inaccurate ethnic characterization. In a racism audit of a seminary an African American student said that in her experience the other students and faculty were cordial, but that there was always the feeling of being held off at a distance. She seldom felt that anyone really knew her as individuals. She had the distinct impression that White students and faculty had almost no way of getting beyond their stereotypes and respond to her as a person.

During our research we received an open letter from American Indians. They spoke of the "stereotypical biases in the ordination process" that favors qualities that are most often found in White, male, Anglo-Saxons. A similar frustration had been voiced by Hispanic seminarians. They spoke of guest priests addressing the student body about what to expect in the parish ministry. Each priest came from a wealthy parish. They talked about multiple staff and abundant resources. Both the American Indians and Hispanics were marginalized by such images of pastoral care. They could identify with none of these congregational settings. Because stereotypes are infectious they began to look at their home communities through the filters of Whites that set standards of success. In comparison their communities were poor, lacking resources to do real ministry. It reinforced the perception that the standard for clergy leadership in many dioceses is the person, usually white and male, who can function shoulder to shoulder with junior and senior executives in an upper middle class community. They began to question the rich cultural and spiritual heritage and strong community bonds back home, much of which is lacking in many white congregations.

One of the results of stereotypes is that it creates categories of *in-groups* and *out-groups*. When ethnicity is included the basis of racism is formed where prejudice and preference combine with power to determine who is *in* and who is *out*. The process leads to the formation of the *dominant in-group* and the *minority out-group*. □

Often times non-White students in seminaries feel a deep sense of isolation even though they are not being actively shunned. At some level they are being labeled "different". Seminaries tend to talk about the rich variety of ethnic students as though this is an accomplishment in dealing with the long history of racism in the U.S. However, a closer look will see that the “diversity” that they are pointing to is because they have foreign students from Africa or Asian and no Americans from the historic ethnic communities.

THE DEADLINESS OF STEREOTYPES

If a person is locked into stereotypes towards someone of another ethnic group, no amount of contact will alter their perceptions. This is rooted in the deep psychological resistance which Spencer calls contempt. It is the observation of the African-American seminarians who experienced fellow students and faculty caught in their stereotypes. If an individual is not opened to have their stereotypes challenged any further contact with a member of the *out-group* will only add to the complexity of their filters. The *in-group's* stereotype projected on persons of the marginal group will only become more fixed. For example, leaders in a diocese with a large number of Native Peoples or Blacks needs to ask itself some very basic questions. What proportion of this population is Episcopalian? What is the history of this diocese or the diocese from which they came towards this/these group(s)? What significant leadership in the church comes from these communities? How have stereotypes barred mission and ministry with and among these peoples?

Stereotypes are inherently inaccurate. Under their influence we cannot assign consistently correct attributions about the other person's behavior. One Asian priest talked about her experience with the Commission on Ministry. She was offended by the questions which some members asked and the generalizations they expressed about her country of birth. When challenged by the members rigidity set in which put a damper on the whole interview. Holding on to our stereotypes and an unwilling to question them creates a defensiveness that stops conversation. Attributions we assigned to other person will continue to be incorrect.

ATTRIBUTIONAL PROCESS

We assign attributes to people or events in order to organize the information we have about them. Attributes are often in error when they come from a place of stereotypes or prior categorization about another cultural or ethnic group. In the church today there are the categories of "ethnic ministries": American-Indian/ Native American/Hawaiian/Alaskan, African-American, Asian-American, etc. *There are no such human beings.* These categories are so broad as to be almost meaningless. There are over six hundred surviving indigenous tribes in the U.S. with distinct cultures as different as Germans and French; there are Afro-West Indians and Hispanic Blacks; there are Latinos for eighteen national origins, not just Mexicans and Mexican-Americans: there are Lao, Lao Meng, Hmong and fifty-five other cultural/language groups in Laos.

Individuals are composites of complex personality types with differing attributes. There are societal, familial, and personal histories in addition to personal responses and choices in living out one's own sense of destiny. As one Asian priest said, "I did not know that I was Asian until I went to college." He was raised in a non-Asian American community. This was his first conscious encounter with Asian stereotypes from those who had no prior experience with someone who looked Asian but was third generation American. This was the beginning of a lifelong struggle to maintain being an individual in the face of social pressures to conform to a multi-dimensional set of assumptions about Asians.

One priest painfully said, "I have never experienced racism as painfully as I have in the church. At the university and even in my career before deciding to seek ordination, I never encountered the kinds of blocks and barriers that were thrown in my way. I think it is doubly difficult to deal with this in the church because in the minds of many people racism shouldn't be here and therefore doesn't exist. No one wants to take responsibility for the fact that they have stereotypes that blind them to the person standing in front of them. Therefore, the church is in a state of denial, which makes it difficult to own and deal with racism."

To illustrate the nature of intercultural attributions let us use an example from an exchange between an Asian seminarian and a rector who has been a field education supervisor. They have been working on a survey of different parts of the parish. On this day the rector is pushed for time and is giving only a few minutes to the seminarian.

Behavior

Attribution (internal reasoning process)

Rector: How long will it take to finish this report on the Asian members of the parish?

Rector: I'll ask her to participate in a planning process.

Asian Seminarian: I'm not sure where his question is coming from? Is he telling me something or is this an invitation? He's worked with seminarians before, why doesn't he just say that he wants this paper done by such and such a time?

Asian Seminarian: I do not know. How long should it take?

Asian Seminarian: I am asking for direction

Rector: She is refusing to take responsibility.

Rector: You are in the best position to know how much time you will need.

Rector: I will press her to take responsibility for her own actions.

Asian: This is confusing. I had better give him an answer.

Asian Seminarian: Two weeks

Rector: She lacks the ability to estimate time accurately. This time is totally inadequate.

Rector: Take three weeks. It is agreed you will do it in three weeks?

Rector: I offered a contract

Asian Seminarian: These are my orders: three weeks.

The first exchange in the conversation indicates coldness in the relationship which does not improve as we note in the inner, attributional thinking. Already the rector is misreading the seminarians behavior who is showing respect to an elder and not a lack of initiative. In fact the report needed over a month to complete, because it required several meetings with the Asian members of the parish. The Asian seminarian worked at trying to get people together, giving up days off and trying to make the deadline. She still needed two more weeks by the time the deadline arrived. Three weeks later:

Rector: Where is the report?

Rector: I am making sure that she fulfills her contract, a contract that she fully participated in creating.

Asian Seminarian: I will need a week

Asian Seminarian: He is demanding a report just for the sake of demanding a report and does not ask how the project is proceeding.

Rector: I knew that she could not be realistic about what was needed.

Rector: But we had agreed that it would be ready today. There is a time table to meet.

Rector: I must teach her to fulfill a contract. She will never make it in the church if she does not meet deadlines

Asian Seminarian: He never once asked me why I couldn't get the report in on time. I would have told him about the problems of getting the people together and the fact that more time was needed for collating and analyzing the material.

The seminarian went to the field placement professor and asked to drop field education for the year. When told it would hold up her graduation if the requirement is fulfilled, she stood there in silence and then walked out. Is racism or sexism a part of this situation? We will explore that later.

As you read this dialogue and the description of the attribution process going on, your first response may be to identify with one side or the other. If this happened, which person did you take sides with?. How you did react indicates something about your own cultural values, attributes and position of power in similar situations? What ethnic group did you place the rector? If she is White what attributes did you assign to her behavior? If she was Asian what difference does that make in your perceptions? From the answer to these questions what stereotypes were in play to form your opinions?

The illustration shows how the same behavior can have multiple interpretations that are highly influenced by culture.

THE INFLUENCE OF ATTITUDES IN THE PROCESS

You've got to be taught
before it's too late
before you are 6 or 7 or 8
to hate all the people your relatives hate...

"Carefully Taught" from the musical "South Pacific"

Attitude is a learned and developed predisposition that directs our response with some kind of evaluation toward a person or object. These evaluations can be positive or negative. They are

composed of three components: *beliefs, emotions, and behaviors*. Usually we preface an attitudinal statement with such phrases as, "I believe that..." or "All (name culture or race) are (add an attribution)..." Examples of *beliefs* are that: White Americans are loud extroverts, Chinese are inscrutable, African-Americans are musical and athletic, Irish are quick tempered, etc. The *emotional* component consists of our evaluation of the person or object in a positive or negative way. If you are Irish you may appreciate the passion of personal interchange, But if you hear disapproval in the other person's voice you will be affronted by such a stereotype. The *behavioral* side demonstrates how we will act in relationship to the other person.

In 1990 a major television news division wanted to document racial attitudes in Washington, D.C. They made available to a group of African-American high school students a number of video cameras. What they recorded was very telling. Neatly dressed, two or three young men would walk up to a White man or woman asking for directions. The person would become very agitated and seek to escape the encounters. This experiment was tried numerous times with the same results. One man seemed to be physically hurled backwards as he was being approached by the young men. What stereotypes do you think were in play?

SUMMARY

Communication is the attempt of one person to make something known about his or her life to another person. Cross cultural communication is the attempt of one person to translate through perceptual filters constructed with cultural assumptions something of his or her life to another person who must make a similar translation through their own cultural categories. Cross cultural communication requires increased skill in interpersonal sensitivity and an ever expanding appreciation for cultural differences in a world that requires increased skills in interpersonal sensitivity.

Questions for Discussion

INVENTORY OF PERSONAL CONTACTS (Pairs or triads - 15- 20 minutes)

Have people take piece of paper and down the middle list the names of the cultural groups which they have encountered in the last month: neighbors, co-workers, members of the congregation, on the street, in shops, on TV, etc. Next at the on the left hand side write "Negative" and on the right hand side write "Positive." Now give a value from 1 (weak) to 10 (strong) for each of the ethnic groups you have encountered. Turn now to another person and for the next 15 minutes discuss between yourselves the content of the top three negative and positive groupings being aware that your responses come from the content of categories you have acquired.

CATEGORIES (Small groups 15-20 minutes)

- Name your own cultural heritage
- List the cultures that you are most drawn to besides your own
- Share around the circle briefly without comment from others
(Pair off)

- List the cultural or ethnic groups you have most difficulty relating to
- Ask yourself, “What is in the content of my reactions to these groups?”
- Share with the other person your list and attitude

(Full Group)

- How do attitudes affect our perception of someone from another group?

STEREOTYPES (10-15 minutes depending on the size of the group)

What have been your experiences of being stereotyped as to gender, age, educational background, ethnicity?

- Invite people to talk about their experience of being stereotyped?
- Because this Resource is focusing on cultural and ethnic diversity move the discussion towards this focus and away from male/female, young/old, etc.

ATTRIBUTIONAL (10-15 minutes depending on the size of the group)

- What experiences challenged your stereotyping and caused to change your attitude and perception of a persons from another cultural or ethnics groups?
- Return to some of the illustrations at the end of this section and use the questions to further your discussion.
- Considering the group you are in at this moment, what areas of cross-cultural communications do you feel that we should give our attention to?

Cultural Norms

I am Christian; I am not sorry the missionaries came.
But I wish they had known how to let their news change people's lives from the
inside, without imposing their culture on our ways.

- A Native American Woman

What makes America America?¹⁸ If we once knew, the answer has become increasingly cloudy. At the core of the Gospel is an understanding of the human family, with all its diversity, being united in the Creator. Over the centuries our national society has tried to form a consensus enshrined in such phrases as "all men being created equal endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights."¹⁹ From the beginning the question was who was equal and who was created as a being human with certain unalienable rights. Below the surface of our society are many undealt with dynamics proceeding from this unfinished issue.

How much has changed and what still needs transformation since 1776 can only be determined by local communities. From the White House to the most basic level of society we are changing. We are being driven by rapidly changing demographics shifts that have vast social, economic, political and religious implications. Below the surface there are two historic pulls to divide people which operate in our national mythology: The *nativist culture*: This mythic element propels those of English, German or other northern European ancestry in their American identity. Its icons are reinforced hourly in all forms of media. While more Blacks are seen in the mainstream media, seldom can one see a Native American, a Hispanic-American, an Asian American or any other group except through worn stereotypes. The *immigrant and land of opportunity*. Many nativists would identify with this mythic root but are joined by southern Europeans and people from around the world, especially if they came struggling to find a new beginning on these shores. The icon for immigrants is enshrined in the words of Emma Lazarus (1883):

Your huddle masses yearning to breath free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-toss to me.

¹⁸ Cultural ethics requires that we note hubris in our use of "America" in referring to the United States. It is offensive to people who understand themselves to be citizens of countries in North, Central or South America.

¹⁹ Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776

I lift my lamp beside the golden door!²⁰

One would assume a universal openness to welcome into our land the diverse populations of the world. The perennial reality of racism and discrimination indicates that this icon is not deeply embedded in our souls. The gains of the Civil Rights Movement in the '60s are being eroded. Instead of finding a nation evolving towards greater pluralism and diversity, we see the continuing divisions rich and poor often intensified by stereotypes of majority and minorities, white and people of color, and between men and women.

MAJORITY CULTURE

Every society, no matter how small or large, will have a dominant group and a minority group. What are the dominant American cultural norms? There are regional differences to be sure. But the majority culture evolving out of Anglo-Saxon and German roots, developed into a distinct American form. This norm is reinforced in many ways from the media to the cultures of families and communities. Why is it important to consider the dominant norms? We need to identify what are the prevalent cultural standards that make our society function in order to determine what needs to be transformed for the sake of ministry. Cultures do not exist without norms which over time become established and are reinforced: "This is the way things are done around here!" Their existence works to bring about conformity and be the means by which people and institutions are organized into stable forms of co-existence. Norms are the basis of socialization in the home and in our educational system. When a society is mono-cultural seldom is there questioning of the dominant cultural system.²¹ Everyone is the same. The *nativist illusion* that America was once mono-cultural cannot stand up to the objective facts of history. Diversity has always been increasing even though attempt at exclusion are painful chapters in every community.

Your own cultural norms. The first step in becoming culturally sensitive is to recognize one's own cultural dynamics. Without a growing ownership and clarity we will project unconscious assumptions onto others. We will expect them to be like us. Therefore, when we encounter a person from a different cultural or ethnic background we stand the risk of misunderstanding, manipulating, or even rejecting that person because they are "not behaving properly."

DOMINANT CULTURE AND THIS RESOURCE

In this Resource we consider the impact that dominant cultural norms have on our assumptions regarding education for ministry and leadership. The focus of our study is on persons coming from ethnic groups that are determines as *minority* cultures. We need to be aware of how the

²⁰ Found on the Statue of Liberty, New York Harbor.

²¹ Usually someone is born into such rigid cultures and raises the ugly questions that disturbed the conventional order. Theologically we know that when life stops evolving God will send such disturbances either in the form of prophets or babies.

dominant cultural expectations affect such persons and the evaluations that are made about them. A few central cultural norms have been chosen and are not exhaustive of the subject. They are broad in nature and not meant to be overly critical of Anglo-Saxon inheritance. Our intention, however, is to point out the negative aspects of our dominant culture, and how it functions unconsciously to form our opinions and interpretations of others.

ANGLO-SAXON CONFORMITY AND CULTURAL NORMATIVENESS

Key to the American Anglo-Saxon norms are assimilation, individualism, conformity, competition and dualism. Henry James Young, an African-American theologian raises an important question:

What keeps social pluralism from benefiting both majority and minority social groups in America and elsewhere?

The answer is Anglo conformity: the demand that minority social groups conform to the values of the white majority social group. Anglo conformity prescribes the norms for intergroup relations.

The Norm of Nativism

That this cultural *normativeness* has proved inadequate I take to be obvious...The history of immigrant groups in the United States demonstrates clearly the dominance of Anglo-Saxon consciousness. The Anglo-Saxon Protestant group dominated because its members were "most similar in race, culture and religion to the earliest colonists." Accompanying this is the presumption that the United States is a function of the Anglo-Saxon race...To be recognized as American, other social groups have been constrained to adopt as their own the Anglo-Saxon cultural standards rather than having been encouraged to cultivate their own heritages. Social acceptance of minority social groups has been contingent upon their embracing the language, customs, values and life-style of the "nativist" white Anglo-Saxon Protestants.²²

There is an obvious danger facing us. This cultural ethos is woven into the fabric of how we, as Episcopalians, "move and live and have our being". We must recognize how these norms can block our perceptions about mission and ministry if not acknowledged. No transformation is possible as long as our perceptions that form our choice stay rooted in our unconscious norms.

²² Young, Henry James, *Hope in Process*, pp 1-2

AMERICAN ANGLO-SAXON CULTURAL NORMS

What are some of these dominant cultural norms?

Assimilation: the expectation that you abandon your own culture of origin in favor of assimilation.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. John Pobbe, an Anglican bishop and theologian from Ghana, said that before you do cross cultural ministry you must answer two questions: 1) Can you be Anglican without aspiring to things English?; and 2) Can you be Anglican without aspiring to things of the establishment? Each diocese must come to terms with answering the question of assimilation. For most of our history we have said *No!* to Pobbe's questions. Many within the church have never realized the price that is paid in abandoning one's culture of origin.

One deacon, who has maintained a career in another profession, relates how she lost contact with her cultural identity:

Then all of a sudden you realize, "Wait a minute, I have lost touch with myself...I've got to go back." I think you go through a period of almost denial of your own identity. Then you have to go back and claim your own richness. It is very hard.

In the past non-Anglo-Saxon Whites have been assimilated into the "mainstream" with relative ease within a generation unless they chose to remain in ethnic communities. They were "most similar" to the nativist Anglo-Saxon. The exception are European Roman Catholics are still discriminated against in certain areas because they are seen as a threat to the Protestant "natives". Once the accents faded and these non-English peoples began to act like "Americans." If they succeeded financially being on the outside tended to disappear. Young pointed out in 1990 that the ultimate expression of being assimilated into America is to be an Episcopalian or Presbyterian. In an age of increased secularization whether or not that still holds will be different in every community.

However, there is a color line which excludes people of darker skin or physical characteristics from "full assimilation". A class system automatically is present in any society that is rooted in a majority/minority culture. In America the results are highly irrational with those who identify with the Anglo-Saxon majority feeling ethnically superior to all who fall outside of their norm, thus creating an **in-group** and **out-groups**. The paradox is seen where Whites maybe poor but they see themselves as better than even persons of other ethnic groups who are educated and have better jobs and live in better neighborhoods.

How does a person in a minority group survive? W.E.B. Du Bois spoke of "double-consciousness. You look at yourself through the eyes of others, measuring yourself by the cultural standards of the majority social group, which in this country looks at African-Americans

with amused contempt and pity."²³

Consider the implications of double consciousness for a Bishop, Commission on Ministry or Standing Committee when interviewing someone from a minority culture. The person may be answering questions through their adapted Anglo-Saxon side. They will not be revealing their own cultural roots. Thus only a partial and skewed impression of the person can be gained.

Individualism: the central point of reference for living is my well-being, security and advancement.

Individualism is the pivotal cultural norm in America. We are preoccupied as a society with individual rights. We socialize our children towards individual achievements from grades in school to ascending the corporate ladder. We emphasize separate, autonomous and self-contained life-styles leading to a sacred private attitudes towards everything in life, including the practice of religion.

The contrast with affiliation cultures. Individualism is rooted so deeply in our bones that it may be extremely difficult to realize that most other cultures are not based on this norm. In many cultures far greater emphasis is given to affiliation and communal continuance than to the place of the individual. The example cited in the communication section of a Latina-American who was sent away from a COM for a year because she conceived of ministry as a shared vocation is a painful example of cross-cultural conflict.

A Chinese-American college student was asked whether or not he had considered studying for the priesthood. His obvious deep faith and leadership abilities would make him an attractive candidate for ordination. His response was that he had thought about it, but his family was opposed. They did not consider the ordained ministry to be a highly esteemed profession.

While there are several dynamics working here, at the root we see a strong norm centered in family consensus verses individual desires.

An Native American seminarian was asked why he wanted to study to be a priest. After a period of silence he smiled and said, "My people said I should come here (seminary)." There was no question that he had a deep calling to be a priest. But he did not begin with an objective answer. He began from his own culture. His reference was his **affiliation** to the tribe.

Whenever Native Americans, or those from other affiliation cultures, gather they inevitably ask each other where they come from and who they are related to. Identity is based primarily on relationship, the place of birth and the location of where your family now lives. The power of

²³ Du Bois, W.E.B, *The Soul of Black Folk*

affiliation was brought home in the interviews when people were asked who influenced them the most about becoming a deacon or priest. More often than not grandparents or elders within the community were the deciding factor in studying for the ordained ministry.

Competition: Individualism ultimately creates competition for power, wealth and the survival of the fittest.

In our nation, material competition has manifested itself through ruthless exploitation of any commodity, including human beings, that could foster economic gain. The institutions of slavery, genocide of Native Peoples, and the evacuation and removal of the civil rights of Japanese-Americans are glaring examples of the dark side of individualism. The ever widening divide of wealth and resources continues to benefit the few at the expense of human suffering.

One woman spoke of the consequence of individualism and competition upon inter-ethnic relationships:

The effect of all of this upon those of us who are minorities is that we don't help each other, either within our own groups or with other minorities. We don't encourage each other in the church because we are still unclear as to what we are doing. I taught with a Black woman at the University when Martin Luther King was assassinated. I came into the office that day and saw that she was upset, so we sat and talked for a while. She had always seen me as "one of them". But as I talked to her about what it meant to be a member of my own minority group she was very surprised and said, "You do understand!"

Abstract Thinking: to stand over and against what you see or interpret.

Abstract thinking is closely related to individualism. However, it is but one of multiple "intelligences" which means the way we learn according to Howard Gardner.²⁴ In education in the dominant culture stresses verbal and mathematical intelligence often devaluing or exclusion of other forms of learning. This bias is reflected in how we do formation for ordained ministry using the academic models are the core systems of "higher learning" in our country. This norm is so highly valued that individual gifts and abilities not demonstrated through high verbal and abstract thinking are often ignored. Great emphasis is placed upon standardized testing, with the General Ordination Exams being an expression of this cultural standard setting. This norm of accumulation of abstract information about scripture, history and theology is placed as the standard for ordination preparation. The focus is upon the integration of concepts and facts rather into a further abstract set of knowledge. The formation diaconal or priestly character, requiring less valued forms of intelligence are peripheral to the ordination process.. Much is lost when abstraction is held up over and against grounding in relationships and spirituality.

²⁴ Gardner, Howard, *Frames of Mind. The theory of multiple intelligences.*

In an *affiliation culture* individualism and abstract thinking slide to the side with the intelligence (the way we learn) of relationships building being in the forefront. Several seminarians were in a diocesan school that purported to be training students for ministry in various ethnic communities. The students reported that the lectures given in Scripture, Theology and Church History were like being drawn into another solar system. The instructors were bright products of American Anglo-Saxon norms presenting their material in highly objective outlines. The students, on the other hand, remained silent wanting to say, "So what?" They felt that they had to endure this Western style of instruction, because the White instructors had the power to pass or fail them. This was the culture of the school: *this is the way things are done around here*. What they longed for was an opportunity to see how history, theology and scripture related to them. For all the verbal intelligence of the teachers, American Anglo-Saxon educational norms were stressed, the acquiring facts in the abstraction or outside of the individual's experience was the norm. Points of reference needed to be contextualized in reference to Native communities, Asia or Latin America or Africa, as well as, Rome, Canterbury, and Germany.

Upward Mobility: the rewards of successful competition means that you rise on the economic and social ladder.

If the pursuit of individualism manifests itself in competition then the rewards are found in the dynamic of *upward mobility*. A class system exists in our society which vehemently denies there is such a thing as class. The Episcopal Church, brought to this country as the Established Church, stands in conflict with the denial of classism while benefiting by many parishioners and clergy who feel that this church reinforces their superiority over others. In some dioceses this norm is dominate that it is impossible have cross cultural ministry because you have to deal with *cross class* ministries. **This is far greater a challenge than cross cultural ministry development.**

In one breath our national myth says we are all equal and deplore the class systems of other countries. However, those who have "made it" financially are revered and often hated at the same time by the rest of the masses. From school days on competition is built into the acculturation process for class president, homecoming queens, etc. laying the foundations for striving upward. Even with all the theology of shared authority in the church, there is a great emphasis and reward upon personal autonomy and power.

In the church we have seen the rise of professionalism in the clergy as the present manifestation of American Anglo-Saxon norms over the last century. Unofficially we have *cardinal* parishes and cardinal rectors. Until recently it was normative to talk about career tracks as priests moved up the ecclesiastical ladder. The Episcopal Church is identified by many in this country as the denomination of the upper middle and upper class. This heritage and social standing poses a dilemma in a powerful class system. If you have a calling to the ordained ministry but are outside of the class norms of the church your possibilities for ministry may be frustrated before you even start. In congregations where the clergy are always the icons of educated, white, upper middle class males there is no much room to imagine yourself standing some day in his place. The distance may be too great to seek acceptance of one's calling if your cultural or ethnic group has experienced a glass ceiling for advancement preventing them from sharing fully in the

exercise of leadership and authority

When someone breaks through the glass ceilings of opportunity there are two predictable effects. First, even if one cultural group rejects the barriers of the dominant norm and moves forward in the ordination process there will be an undercurrent of suspicion of any one who rises up to unbalance the *status quo* and offer themselves for leadership. Second, the cultural community of origin may be proud of a person's achievement on one hand but be critical that they have left their roots. In *affiliation cultures* trust begins to wane in individuals who claim personal, autonomous authority. There is a double bind rooted in both the imposed classism and cultural traditions of affiliation. Those persons of ethnic affiliation cultures who have sought assimilation into the dominant *individualistic culture* and succeeded to a certain extent are often castigated by members of their own group. Labels are used such as *uppity*, *Oreo* – black on the outside and white on the inside, or a *banana* - yellow on the outside and white on the inside, or *apple* - red on the outside and white on the inside, etc. - are all in an attempt to shame the person and possibly bring them *back home*.

Dualism: the separation of experiences, people and places into hierarchies of value.

Dualism is deep-set in our bones. We may not conceive of any other way of relating to life. When woven into the class system inherent categories of majority (good) and minority (questionable if not bad) characterize any culture and in our case the American Anglo-Saxon culture. Reinforced by individualism, cultural dualism separates people placing them in hierarchies of value. Over time categories are formed: good/bad, superior/inferior, tolerable/unacceptable, safe/dangerous, etc. In **dualism** the opposites are awarded values. One side is awarded the place of privilege while the other is excluded.

Inclusive cultures, in contrast to those founded on dualism, stress openness to self and others, revering the wisdom and experience of old age over the impulsiveness of youth. In these cultures there is a high value on inclusion of tragedy and the resilience of survival, an interdependence of persons and a value of direct experience. There is a creative synthesis sought after in all aspects of life. There is a much more fluid sense of time. Oral tradition verses authoritative documents, proceed from this form of culture.

Dualism and the Foundations of Racism. Dualism inevitably places people into categories of good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable. Early in the history of contact the European colonist found the native peoples to be obstacles to the establishment of their enterprises. The indigenous people were labeled bad and subhuman. Even though there were atrocities among the Spanish, the Anglo-Saxon culture in this country, formed in dualism, demonstrated a marked intolerance for native cultures. The sad history of destruction, enslavement, and oppression that began in Jamestown continues today at so many levels of our American Anglo-Saxon society.

In the early foundation of this country dualism gave the white American the rationale to maintain slavery while still believing that they were "good Christians". Simply put, the African was different, not white. The African had been purchased as a slave and therefore had a value, not as a human but as an object of commerce. In dualism there developed a destructive reasoning: A

white American, especially those with land or wealth and by their very nature of being white, holds the privilege of being what is good and noble in society. A black person - never considered a member of society except for tax purposes – is not capable of making right choices or possessing the ability of being truly good. Therefore, such a person is subhuman or even non-human. The owner-master has the right and duty to bring forth a profit from his legally held property. Even after nearly four centuries this foundational reasoning for racism still infects our society. This hierarchical distortion impact is on all of us, but especially Indigenous or Native Americans and African Americans who still carry the negative projections that are rooted in the dualism of European society. When we add subsequent waves of immigrants who have been infected by this condition, who also brought their own prejudices of others who were different from them in their home countries, we see the vast complexity of the problem of dualism and racism. Our next section looks more deeply at the roots of racism.

QUESTIONS

Why is it important to consider cultural norms?

How do you know of the impact of the American Anglo-Saxon norms described here?

What problems exist when the Episcopal Church functions as a continuation of the "American Anglo-Saxon cultural dominance?"

Exercise:

Have people describe what are the important customs of Christmas for them?

What elements of Christmas really need to be in place for you to say "This is really Christmas?"

Where do these traditions come from? How have they been commercialized in popular culture?

Discussion

What would it take for the diocese to be rooted in cultural norms that celebrate diversity instead of assimilation and conformity?

What non-commercial and non-English/German customs of Christmas are celebrated in our diocese? What are they like?

What are the implications of the five American Anglo-Saxon norms for your own life?

What are the implications for the life of the diocese?

Who are the "minorities" in your diocese?

What happens when we continue to use the terms "minorities", "non-White", "ethnic ministries"?

RACISMISM

FORMING A DEFINITION

We are not intending to put people of the majority culture on the defensive in addressing racism as a specific outcome of cultural norms. Guilt is never an appropriate emotion to motivate people to work at personal transformation. We hope that racism can be seen as a fact, no matter how painful, and that each person can take steps to address this issue in their own life. At the 1991 General Convention in Phoenix an audit was given on race and ethnic relations in the Episcopal Church. To quote from the introduction:

The Episcopal Church has a long history of welcoming people of different races and ethnicity. We use the word *race* to reflect differences rooted in biology (e.g., skin color) and *ethnicity* to refer to differences based on learned patterns of behavior (e.g., art, ceremony, language). Although race and ethnicity is not the same thing, the two qualities are usually closely related in a meaningful fashion - even though the nature of the relationship differs from various groups and may depend on geographical location.

The Episcopal Church recognizes that it is easier to set goals about productive relationships among people of different backgrounds than to reach the desired outcomes. Members of the church have expressed concerns about the kinds of experiences all people are having with the church's increasing racial and ethnic diversity. They are aware that desirable goals can be sometimes pursued with consequences that are undesirable...

Racism

Fundamentally, racism is the abuse of power by a racial group that is more powerful than (an)other racial group(s) and the use of that advantage to exclude, demean, damage, control or destroy the less powerful group(s).

The results of the audit presented the multifaceted reality of racism as it exists in the Episcopal Church. Basically, racism is *power plus prejudice*. The act of someone who has the power to effect someone's life negatively and exercises that power in a discriminatory fashion against a person who come from an ethnic is racism. This is a painful subject for individuals and the church to face. But it must be taken up, especially in the ordination process. For too long the sad history of exclusion and discrimination in the church has gone on. The ordination process must deal with the potential of racism over and over again in both the leaders who exercise power in the process and those who enter the process. It is not a matter of eradicating racism

because it is so deeply embedded in the culture. Racism has been socialized within us for over four hundred years. The ethical and religious mandate is for us to be aware of this heritage from our parents and community and make new choices. The answer lies in individuals recognizing where the presence of racist attitudes are within themselves and making choices not to allow this inner content to spill out into relationships.

In this section we will look at some of the assumptions that can be made about racism. We will draw from the previous section on cultural norms to look at prejudice, stereotyping, and ethnocentrism. A distinction will be made between individual and institutional racism and how covert racism can be subtly present in a relationship without it initially being detected. Finally, we will present some recommendations for both majority and minority persons.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. *Racism is reflected in behavior.* Racism is seen in what a person does as opposed to how a person feels or thinks. Racist acts originate in feelings, attitudes and thoughts but do not become racists until they are acted out. Jesus said, "It is not what goes into a person that defile them, but what comes out of them."²⁵ While an individual may repress racist attitudes because of a societal prohibition against discrimination or a commitment to serve of a higher, more inclusive value, if the internal construct of racism is not owned by the individual it will eventual creek out. Out of seemingly no where the person will act to demean, control, exclude or damaging another individual or group because of their ethnicity or race

2. *Racist acts can be performed by non-prejudiced as well as prejudiced people.* Prejudice is often confused with racism, but it is not itself racism. Another misconception is that prejudice always precedes racism and discrimination as a learned condition. These arguments may sound convincing. Yet, we can see over and over again the fact that well-intentioned people can still behave to the detriment of others. A seminary excluded a minority family from its housing on the grounds that the regulations only allowed for four people in the apartment and there were six in this family. A semester later a white family of six comes to seminary and is given an on campus apartment. Is this racism without prejudice or the combination of both?

At the deepest level there are the inherited racist norms in the American Anglo-Saxon cultural majority. Take the example of class and race. The dominate cultural norms have been in place so long that an individual might believe that classes of people based on race and ethnicity are the way society is meant to function. When racism seems to be organic to a culture because it has been in place for so long, it is extremely difficult to transform. Take the sustained negative reaction of some in our country to the first African-American President, based not on politics but on the deep seated cultural norms that engendered racism. An individual can believe that they are a good person with openness to everyone and still be motivated by an inner assumption of superiority. The key is whether or not these predispositions lead to actions that are discriminatory against other races or ethnic groups.

²⁵ Matthew 15:11

3. *Racism is not the sole responsibility of a single ethnic group.* Anyone is capable of behaving in a racist manner, including ethnic minorities themselves. The key is who has the power. Because the dominant cultural norm in this country is American Anglo-Saxon, much of the reality of racism must use this majority culture as the point of reference. However, each cultural heritage has a history of racism. Indigenous peoples were divided along tribal and often clan. Likewise within African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Latino-Americans societies consciously or unconsciously there maybe individual acts of racism. However, their ability to sustain or broadly effect the general society is incidental and limited because they are still living in the context of the larger American Anglo-Saxon society. The exercise of power over others to dominate, control or destroy has plagued humanity from the beginning of history.

4. *The criteria for judging whether or not a behavior is racist lies in the consequences, not the causes, of the behavior.* Research and reflection on the rise of dominant cultural norms and the origins of racism has its limitations. Changed behavior, actions are the proof of transformation of this cultural norm. During the past decades, pushed by the Civil Rights movement, tremendous emphasis has been given to consciousness raising. But only limited change of behavior has occurred. No longer do most school campuses, corporate offices, and communities gatherings in most parts of the country tolerate an overt acts of racism. A half century of societal transformation is beginning to pay off. In 1992 the seminary racial audit cited early noted with concern that there was less awareness and commitment to deal with issues of racism and racial tensions than when the school was involved in the heat of the civil rights movement three decades ago. Minorities in each seminary community would need to assess the present health of their school based on the level of engagement with racism.

5. *Power is a force that is absolutely essential to perpetuate racism.* Power is the ability to control ourselves and others as a means of altering problem situations or reducing environmental stress. Powerlessness is the inability to control ourselves or others. People in power can control access to opportunities and privileges of people without power. It is important that a diocese undertake a racism audit on a regular basis, noting structural where power is exercised to exclude minorities from full participation in the life of the church. Special care must be given to looking at the dynamics of the ordination process. Suggestions are made in the next section concerning the Commission on Ministry.

RELEVANT TERMS

PREJUDICE

Prejudice literally means a preconceived judgment or opinion without justification or sufficient knowledge. (Abelson 1985) Prejudice can be positive or negative. For the sake of this study we will use the term to refer to negative judgments. It arises out of cultural norms described in the last section and is based on social comparison. Prejudice is directed towards persons who are in the out-group and involves negative attitudes and intentions.

STEREOTYPING

Stereotyping is a simplified, generalized labeling of certain people or social groups. A common

stereotype is that all Episcopalians are upper middle class, white Americans. Prejudice, on the other hand, is a specific kind of stereotyping which includes bigotry. *Bigotry* is the state of mind of someone who is rigidly devoted to his own group and is intolerant of other groups.

Prejudiced people stereotype, but people who stereotype are not necessarily prejudiced. Stereotypes allows a person to package certain experiences into a manageable group of categories. These categories usually have some "kernel of truth" that is mixed in with a lot of misinformation. Stereotyping becomes faulty when characteristics assigned to one group are assumed to be generally negative or inferior. The danger of stereotypes is that they present an overly generalized and simplified mental picture, and once they are adopted it is highly resistant to change. (Axelson 1985)

ETHNOCENTRISM

Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's own group is the center of everything and the standard by which all other groups are measured. Ethnocentric people behave in the interest of their in-group. Ethnocentrism becomes racist when the interest and values of the dominant group are used to block the well-being and privileges of other groups. Bigotry, cited above, is one of the clear attitudes and behaviors of ethnocentric people.

RACISM: INDIVIDUAL, INSTITUTIONAL, COVERT-OVERT

Racism, as we have defined it, is the abuse of power by An ethnic/racial group that is more powerful than another ethnic/racial group, using their power to their advantage to exclude, demean, damage, destroy or control the less powerful group. The key concepts here are behavior and *systematic* activities. Racism confers benefits upon the dominant group that include psychological feelings of superiority, social privilege, economic position, or political power. (Axelson 1985)

Dimensions of Racism. Racism can be classified into *individual* and *institutional* racism. Individual racism involves the adverse use of power of one person over another individual or group. Institutional racism involves the adverse use of power woven into the structure of a social system or institution. Overt racism can be either individual or institutional and is always intentional. Covert racism can be either, but is hidden or masks the motives behind other behavior. Unintentional covert racism occurs when the behavioral effects are unintended or even contrary to the persons motives. (Ridley 1989)

COLOR BLINDNESS

Color blindness in the ordination process is an illusion based on the erroneous assumption that the minority nominee or seminarian is just another person in the ordination track. It is a denial of the deep spiritual and psychological distortions that are in all of us because of the inheritance of racism. To deny this is to allow racism to run unchecked in its covert form. Hidden below the surface is an ethnocentric American Anglo-Saxon perspective that we all arrive at the table with equal advantage and background. African-American clergy spoke of the polite distance they felt while attending seminary. They noted that over the years there was a decrease in genuine

concern in combating racism and developing interests in cross cultural ministry. Other priests talked about their diocese lacking any strategy for evangelism that would have given preferential care and encouragement to minorities. Instead they were forced to compete with inherent disadvantage with other newly ordained priest with no promise of employment once they completed their training.

Bishops, COMs, Standing Committees, Seminaries that fail to understand the culture of their minority postulants tend to regard values and cultural norms of these persons as inherently inferior to their own values. Resulting discriminatory actions may be covert and even unintentional, but it is there. One of the most common racist attitudes has to do with the assumption that if a person cannot speak English with a minimal accent then they are intellectually inferior and must be treated as such. Listen to a person raise their voice and speak in a higher pitch to the other person and you will see the very spectrum of prejudice lifting up. It is as though the person is addressing someone in preschool.

COLOR CONSCIOUSNESS

Color consciousness is an illusion based on the erroneous assumption that all of the person's problems come from being an ethnic minority. This is the opposite of color blindness. In the mind of the majority assumptions are formed like: "If he was not a Native American, these problems would not exist", or "She's angry because she's African-American." A major cause of color consciousness comes from the guilt a member of the dominant society feels about the mistreatment of minorities in this country. This can result in tokenism, moving a person forward in a process when they are not really qualified. This comes neurotic guilt (constantly recycling) that can never be transformed until the roots of racism and the tragic history of our society is confronted in each individual. Hidden in the illusion of color consciousness is a covert desire to atone for the racism of the majority culture. Conversely, those in a minority position may pick up the definitions of the dominant society on them and assume that projected identity which has the power to shape their self-image and sense of worth. This is the process of socialization. At that point the person is has to work through not only their own levels of unconsciousness but those of the dominate society that is telling them who they are. Operating under such illusion causes distortions of perception and in the process of evaluating the person for ordination can be disastrous.

MISINTERPRETING A PERSON'S NONDISCLOSURE

Case Study for Individual and Institutional Racism. A COM or Standing Committee cannot declare that their meetings are free of racism. Such a concept assumes a level of consciousness and personal responsibility for prejudicial attitudes that is not possible outside of the individual. The greater the denial of attitudes such as racism increases the likelihood of its presence. The socialization of ethnic minorities in America has conditioned them to be cautious and mistrusting of majority group encounters. The interviews that formed this Resource reveal the hesitancy of clergy from minority communities to speak up in majority situations. Little candor is possible unless a third of those present in the group come from non-majority cultures. If this is true of clergy who have trained themselves to participate in the mainstream of the church, how difficult is it for minority nominees? Often in an interviewing situation there may be no other person of

their cultural background. Even if there is another person of from a minority culture there is no guarantee of transparency. The one-third rule is fast. To members the COM or the Standing Committee the environment may be very comfortable because this is the way they always meet. This is the *culture* of those groups. However, for all people coming in from the outside there is a level of discomfort because they are coming before a committee that will make judgments on their personhood. This is intensified for many minorities and because they are not only in a new cultural setting of discernment but one that historically may have discriminated against people similar to themselves. Therefore, to be transparent and to reveal something of depth will be a struggle.

More than one of the persons interviewed talked about being turned down by the COM because they could not articulate their faith. They had no problem doing that within their own cultural context. An African-American priest said it this way, "It is like being asked to bring out your dirty laundry in front of the master. Even though they want to hear the positive things about your faith, the emotional impact, if you are the only Black in the room, can be devastating."

A BEHAVIORAL MODEL OF RACISM IN THE CHURCH

	Individual Racism	Institutional Racism
Overt	e.g. a priest who believes that ethnic minorities are inferior and on that basis refuses to encourage minorities into the ordination process.	e.g. a diocese which denies ministry development among minorities and hold on to the ordination standards that discriminate against minorities, such as language, education, financial support
Covert	e.g. a bishop who postpones interviews with non-English speaking nominees because he or she is personally uncomfortable with the ethnic group of the person.	e.g. the COM who spends years avoiding the issues of alternative theological training and supervision of ethnic minorities
Unintentional	e.g. the COM member who functions under the illusion of color blindness and hold untrue assumptions about ethnic groups	e.g. the COM that uses the GOEs routinely without any consideration of the extreme stress under which bilingual seminarians are placed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOGNIZE RACISM IN THE STRUCTURE

The healthiest step that can be taken by the Church is to recognize and admit that racism exists within its being. We see signs that says "The Episcopal Church has AIDS" but we seldom see signs that survive long that state "The Episcopal Church has Racism." Note, we are not saying that the Church is racist because such a statement to an individual or an institution is a permanent condemnation. Racism is a disease. An individual that has a disease need not be defined by the

disease. All societies that have in-groups and out-groups are infected with racism when ethnicity comes into play. As long as one cultural group has power over other groups there will be the problem of discrimination. A diocese, a commission or committee must accept the ongoing work of identifying the presence and reality of racism. The issue to do sensitivity training on the matter cannot become a fad that is forgotten in a year or so. It has taken five hundred years of encounter between Europeans and non-Europeans to create the present structure of racism in this country. It will not be dismantled in our life time nor that of our children or grandchildren.

MODEL A DIFFERENCE

Racism is seen in behavior. How can members of the Church act from a different center to change the culture of their relationships and organization? One must be intentional about the not *doing things around here the way that they have always been*: a shift in the structure of the culture. Bishops need to be aware that minorities in general will not feel free to act from their own authority unless at least one third of the membership of the COM or other committees are minorities. A preferential choice must be given to appoint minorities to the COM and other bodies in the Church at this stage of our institutional transformation. Tokenism results when leaders only go part way to add color to the table and where choices are not made on the basis of substance. Affirmative action does not deal with racism but it is a necessary step in institutional transformation. It creates the environment in which racism can be seen and then dealt with. You have to have a critical mass before anything will begin to change. Qualified people of color are found in every community who can be invited to share in the leadership of the church.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The common cry of dioceses is that there are no qualified minorities to sit on the councils of the Church. Such an attitude may be grounded in covert racism, be it intentional or not. Given the benefit of the doubt, the new Ministry Canons clearly state that bishops and COMs are to identify, recruit and train and ordain knowledgeable persons from the various ethnic and racial groups to exercise these skills in the larger Church. This must be an intentional, on-going strategy that cannot be dismantled until there is truly a guarantee of a sustained representation of the diverse population within the diocese. If the argument goes that it takes years of experiences to rise in the ecclesiastical ladders of the church, then today is almost too late to start. But this is the day to recruit and train people in the art of church polity.

FACILITATE HEALTHY ETHNIC IDENTITY

Ethnicity has been equated with sex, politics and death as a subject that touches off deep unconscious feelings in many people. Facilitating healthy ethnic identity has many starting places. People of the majority culture must deal with both their color blindness and their color consciousness. They often have to discover the nature of their own ethnic identity, not as having been descendent from somewhere but how they are formed in the cultural dynamics of their own life. They must move to confront any collective guilt they have regarding the treatment which minorities have and are experiencing in this society. If a person does not have a positive regard for their own cultural heritage then they cannot regard the cultural values of another person. You cannot love your neighbor if you first cannot love yourself. American Anglo-Saxons must find a new way of loving themselves that does not exclude their neighbor or thrust them into unending

guilt or bigotry. They must get in touch with and claim the richness of their own Anglo-Saxon, or whatever European roots.

For persons in minority cultures it is essential that they recognize the price that has been paid because of racism and the denigration of their cultural heritage. For decades in the Church, following the lead of the dominant culture sought to maintain a homogenize the culture of the Church so as to govern with greater ease. This is true of American society in general. That person who has been grafted or desires to be grafted into the central cultural norms of this country pays a tremendous price in losing contact with their root.

Racism is the greatest threat facing the future of the Church and society. We must be fearless in our commitment to face racism in ourselves, in our relationships with others and in the institutions of our society. We must not turn back from the on-going process of recognition and transformation.

Jon Townsend coined the greeting based on Alcoholics Anonymous: "Hi, I'm Jon. I'm a recovering ethnocentric. I'm trying to live one day at a time without using stereotypes."

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Begin by state the obvious: the topic of racism is loaded with emotional content. Because of its volatile nature, touching the raw nerves and experience of many, it is important to stress that the goal of these discussions is to create a community of trust where open and candid sharing can be accomplished. Racism is a disease. We all have it. Let's work at finding cure.

- 1) Have each person bring a list of four issues that arise for them in reading this chapter.
- 2) Emphasize that no comment or criticism of another person's feelings is appropriate if we are trying to build a community of trust.
- 3) Put the list on newsprint noting where there are duplications with a check mark. Have each person talk briefly about why these stood out. If there is a larger group than twelve divide into smaller groups for this process
- 4) Ask the group to reflect together about what they have heard: What are the feelings that are stirred up? What other questions occur? Where are the resistances to look deeper?
- 5) Question: If what we have described is somewhat found in our society what are the implications for the Church?
- 6) Let this discussion be as full as possible. The leader should not try to focus the discussion. Record the input on newsprint new the contributions in #2.
- 7) Note: Psychologically there is a tendency to reduce complex matters into simple terms when the topic hits a deep emotional cord. Leaders should avoid this tendency at all costs.
- 8) Question: What are the next steps that we need to take? List on newsprint.
- 9) Prioritize the input and assign persons to lead in these actions.

IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMISSIONS ON MINISTRY (COMS)

My heart sinks when I hear that you want to study for the priesthood.

- *A Sioux priest to a Navajo youth*

We are addressed by a sobering statement in turning to the central role of Commissions on Ministry. While the material is addressed to COMs, it is equally applicable to Standing Committees, Departments of Mission and Diocesan Councils. Discernment for the future ordained leadership of the Church is an awesome responsibility and does not reside just in the actual interviews of nominees. There must be an active theological and practical sense of mission and ministry of the diocese.²⁶ They are asked to pray and assist their bishop to have "the mind of the Church." They must constantly wrestle with the Church's future needs for ministry leadership. Their work then is to bring their prayer and wrestle to the discerning of who should be identified, recruited and supported for leadership into this future, both lay and ordained. It is crucial that the most sensitive and creative people serve on the Commissions on Ministry. These, along with the Standing Committee are the gate keepers of the future.

In the sections on cross cultural communication, norms and racism we have seen the complexities which face every diocese. We have stressed the intentionality in pursuing a new course through the complexities of ministry discernment, recruitment and deployment for a broader mission among all people within its boundaries. If the complexities are not recognized and addressed then a variety of filters remain in place preventing anything but the *status quo* to drive the ordination process. These filters will act to screen out people who present themselves for the future ordained leadership of the Church. Ultimately, we are addressing the question of whether power will be redistributed within the Church so that people who do not "look like us" can share fully in the leadership and councils of the Church.

WHERE TO START?

The use of this resource may represent a new stage in the life of the Commission on Ministry and

²⁶ "Meeting on New Ground: Cultural Diversity in the Ordination Process" (TEC 2007) has several chapters on diocesan strategies for diversity and the theological implications for all who are involved in the ordination process.

the Standing Committee. We suggest that a facilitating team be appointed to introduce members to the process of becoming culturally sensitive and cross-culturally competent. The process needs to be on-going for the purpose of going deeper into the issues presented in this resource and introducing new people into the new values and norms that are suggested.

The members of the facilitation team should take this material, arrange it in their own order, add to it, and carry forth the challenge of cultural sensitivity in the COM and Standing Committee. It is recommended that the team access “Meeting on New Ground: Cultural Diversity in the Ordination Process” which expands and goes deeper into the issues that this resource raises. It can be found on the Church Center web site: www.episcopalchurch.org and searching for this title. It is imperative that the facilitation team be composed of people with vision, dedication and a willingness to be vulnerable and transparent in working through these issues.

DIOCESAN MISSION STATEMENTS

Hopefully each diocese has already articulated a concern for ministry among its diverse population. Perhaps it has moved towards some statement of mission that expresses the desire to be inclusive of all the people within its boundaries. The first thing that a COM or Standing Committee needs to do is look at these statements, review their history, and consider whether these goals are adequately expressed in their working values, policies and procedures. There must be openness to the possibility that the present diocesan mission statements are ineffectual for the challenge. There must be a willingness to present reassessments and advocate for evolved imperatives. The summary section on Diocesan Strategies can be used as a starting place to enter into dialogue around this key area. If there is not present the intention to become cross cultural in the stated goals of the diocese, then all of this effort will eventually find itself relegated to the side lines.

DIOCESAN HISTORIES

- What was the date and name of the first non-White congregation established in our diocese?
- What was its mission and ministry focus?
- Who were the leaders?
- What has happened to this ministry?
- If it has not continued, what happened?

The response to these questions can give a reading on how much knowledge of cross-cultural ministry has existed in your diocese. At this point in our history no diocese picks up the challenge of cultural diversity for the first time. There can be some fascinating stories, some wonderful successes, and painful failures that need to be remembered. These were models of ministry development in their own day. In remembering your heritage you need to bring questions of why they were begun, how they developed, what they accomplish, what were the barriers to their future development, and most importantly if appropriate, why did they die. These are rich resources that may possess wisdom that needs to be brought forward into the present dialogue. It would be important to invite people who helped make that history, or who have specific knowledge of various ministries to spend some time sharing their responses to

these questions.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- How many languages are spoken in the geographical area of your diocese? Name them.
- How many languages are spoken in the worshipping communities of your diocese? Name them.

With the expansion of the internet information from the 1990 and 2000 Census should be acquired in anticipation of the 2010 Census. Resources such as Percept might be considered. Vague hunches do not take the place of the actual facts about who is living in your diocese.

PRESENT STATUS OF MINISTRIES

A diocese that has no ministries with non-Euro-Americans can look in several directions. Consider the work of other denominations. Evaluate the scope of their ministry with various groups. Look at the demographics and note which groups have no ministries among the various religious communities. At a joint meeting with your Department of Missions to bring in their current strategies in cross cultural ministry development. Such a collaborative meeting should be repeated annually. The goal of mission should not be to proselytize from other faith communities, but focus on the un-churched.

DEVELOP A CROSS-CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

Set up a day or series of sessions where various ministries are invited to make a report depending on the number of ethnic or non-Euro-American ministries,. This strategy will be essential when persons present themselves from specific cultural backgrounds and COM members have some working background as to the ministry of the nominating congregation. When we consider the interviewing process, we will look at additional suggestions.

As we are exposed to the past and the present our imaginations will be stretched. If there has been no ethnic ministries among non-Euro-Americans in a diocese, or if there is not a proactive mission stance to develop one, then there is a problem in the lack of imagination in ministry development. Such a condition should be seriously considered by the Bishop and COM.

WHO HAS THE VISION?

As you begin to invite communities to share about their ministry, note who seems to have a vision about where the future could unfold. Identify other lay and clergy leaders in the diocese, or even in other denominations or faiths to come and share with you the needs, hopes and desires of their people. Encourage one another to become more culturally literate by reading authors in various cultures that are addressing the future. Add to the list of titles suggested at the end of the resource.

Something will happen if a diocese declares its intention to move into cross-cultural ministry development. It seems to signal a catalyst forming by which the Holy Spirit can respond.

Visions are born in individuals but bear fruit in community. Often the visions for the future must come from the outside, at the peripheries of an institution and not its center. Humility is needed by leaders to acknowledge that they may not have the answer to the future ministry. If humility is established then it is amazing to see how many people are carriers of the vision and yet currently may not be in any leadership position in the Church. Who better to talk to about mission and ministry among Laotians or Vietnamese than Laotians and Vietnamese? The leaders are there, in networks of relationships. They only need to be asked and invited into the process.

INDIVIDUAL AS CARRIER OF THE FUTURE

The work of envisioning or re-envisioning the future should be an on-going priority in which all levels of a diocese are collaboratively involved. Such work cannot be done in a vacuum or in the abstract. It should always be done in the midst of a concrete possibility for action. Bishops, Commissions on the Ministry, Departments of Mission, and Standing Committees should actively pursue dialogue with leaders of various communities about the future. They should try to identify the persons who have a burning passion for what might be the next step in mission. No amount of theoretical planning or published papers can bring about ministry. It is the individual who is the carrier of the future, and specific communities of individuals who will incarnate a distinct mission and ministry within the Church. All levels of the Church are asked to help form and reform the sense of mission for the future and to seek out those persons who appear to have qualities of leadership that will cause the vision to take on reality.

The role of the discerning bodies is to ask prayerfully in the face of God, "Is this vision and vocation needed in the leadership of the Church today and for tomorrow?" Each person stands under the judgment of what values they are trying to serve when they make such decisions.

WHAT TOOLS ARE NEEDED

HOW AND WHERE DOES MINISTRY HAPPEN?

It is essential that COMs be aware of the variety of models for ministry development in their diocese and the church beyond. The implications for each model must be clearly understood. There is no *one* way in which ministry develops in the church. Therefore, in considering persons for the ordained ministry we have to set aside romantic and stereotypical model of a local faith community: one priest, one congregation, one church building in a village setting. If we try to retain a single model vision of the Church we create a very narrow set of filters to related to persons nominated for ordained leadership. They will be selected on the basis of whether or not they fit into this single traditional setting.

DISPEL THE NOTION OF INTER-CHANGEABLE MINISTRY

The notion that a person is ordained for the whole Church has some theological soundness. However, when we go a step farther and expect that each person is capable of being the dean of a cathedral or a priest on a Native American reservation we have lost the point of the theological

assumption. Inter-changeable ministry has never been the case. However, expectations for ministry abilities still are often conceived of within a very narrow range of Anglo-Saxon norms. It is driven by the need for standardization in training and is given full expression in the General Ordination Exams. Our research tells us that people from other cultural backgrounds are asking the church to let them identify the persons who they feel should be their deacons and priests and to have the major say when they feel they are ready for ordination. Not to explore this possibility is to touch the core of racism within the church.

PRESENT NORMS – ONLY A FEW GENERATIONS OLD

Statements like, "This is the way the Church has always been," need to be countered with a historical perspective where there has never be a static existence for the Church. The Church is a cultural phenomenon which has always adapted or resisted the movements of the larger society. But in what ever stance it took its life, like the larger society was changing. What people assume to be the way the Church has always been is in reality only a couple of generations old. However, when the Church begins to consider living with something as challenging as intentional cultural diversity there is a threat to the illusionary norms of the majority. The dynamics described under cultural norms will be played out in full force and act as a barrier to the inclusion of a plurality of people. From the earliest days the Church has always been dealing with pluralism, struggling to maintain unity, often failing. The forms have either evolved to respond to new needs or become petrified in reaction to new challenges that were beyond the imagination of the leadership.

Dialogue on the paradigm shifts

One of the most important things that leaders can do is to enter into discussions about the shifts in the ways we conceive the Church and its mission and the models for ministry.

WHO SHOULD BE ON THE COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

One newly ordained priest commented that having gone through the ordination process he wondered why certain people were on the COM. If diocesan structures are meant to serve the mission of the church, then we must look at the qualities and qualifications of the persons who will sit in the councils of the Church. Listed below are core individual values that need to be nurtured and expanded in making judgments about the future ministry of the Church.²⁷ If the COM members (as well as, member of the Standing Committee, Department of Missions, or Diocesan Council) are committed to grow in cultural competence then these qualities can becomes goals and standards to critique the effectiveness of individuals who serve in the discernment process. We assume that everyone possesses all of these attributes, knowledge base and skills at the present moment. They, however, should be a part of the personal challenge of each member of any leadership group that desires to nurture an inclusive future for the Church.

²⁷ Adapted from Barzon, 1989

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Personal qualities that reflect genuine, accurate empathy, non-possessive warmth and a capacity to respond with flexibility to a range of possible solutions.
- Acceptance of ethnic differences between people.
- A willingness to work with people of different ethnic groups being sensitive to the fact that many of them have experienced being minorities in the dominant society.
- An ability to recognize and articulate their own cultural biases and the other's ethnicity and how they can either be accommodated or present potential conflict.
- Personal commitment to change racism and discrimination beginning by identifying the impact of this heritage within one's own psychological make-up.
- Resolution of feelings about the history of the church's exclusion of minorities from full participation and leadership in the church.

KNOWLEDGE

- Knowledge of the culture (history, traditions, values, family systems, artistic expressions) of ethnic groups, especially those who have been minorities.
- Knowledge of the impact of class and ethnicity on behavior, attitudes, and values.
- Knowledge of the religious leadership dynamics of in specific ethnic groups especially as they differ from the dominant cultural group.
- Knowledge of the role of language, speech patterns and communication styles in ethnically distinct communities.
- Knowledge of power relationships within the community and in relationship to the majority culture.

SKILLSs

- Techniques for learning the cultures of other people.
- Ability to communicate accurate information on behalf of ethnic minority persons and their community.
- Ability to discuss openly ethnic differences and issues and to respond to culturally-based cues especially the painful history of racism and cultural exclusion in this country.

- Interviewing techniques reflective of the understanding of the role of language in the minority person's culture.
- Ability to utilize the concepts of empowerment on behalf of ethnic minorities and their communities.
- Capability of using resources on behalf of ethnic minority persons and their communities.
- Ability to recognize and combat racism, racial stereotypes, and myths in individuals and in institutions.
- Ability to evaluate new techniques, research, and knowledge as to their validity and applicability in working with the ordination process and the mission of the Church.

Members of the COM and other diocesan groups can gain these skills and this knowledge through training and experience. The personal attributes can be developed through exposure to the positive aspects of minority cultures.

INTERVIEWING PROCESS

PREPARATION

The COM should determine who in its membership has the following information. If no one is competent to interpret and recognize cultural nuances then persons from the cultures or with cultural background should be invited to sit on the COM for these sessions. Diocese are encouraged to seek assistance from Provincial or the Ethnic Congregational Development desks of the Church Center to provide resource persons for the discernment process if no one is available locally.²⁸

- **Specific knowledge of the culture.** There should be a combination of native persons and those who have an experiential knowledge of the person's background.
- **Language competence if appropriate.** If the person is not bilingual then at least two if not more interviewers should be bilingual so that the major interviewing is done without the labor of translating. A separate translator should be used besides the interviews so that they do not have to maintain a dual role. Questions should be kept at a minimum so that there is not a reinforcement of majority-minority dynamics.
- **Specific knowledge and sensitivity of the religious dimensions of the culture.** There needs to be persons who are sensitive to the place and form of spirituality within the soul of the person's culture. The danger is to look at these aspects through the filters of the

²⁸ A fuller guide for COMs can be found in "Meeting on New Ground: Cultural Diversity in the Ordination Process – Opportunities for Commissions on Ministry." (Church Publishing 2007)

American Anglo-Saxon spirituality which may or may not have any such parallel.

- **Specific knowledge of the ministry within diverse cultures in the diocese** and the larger Church. Again, the use of the provincial and Church Center ethnic ministries will be invaluable.
- **Cultural advocates.** Every person has to travel some distance culturally when they approach the institutions of the majority culture. A white Southerner seeking ordination in California will probably not have the same cultural/psychological distance to travel as a Cambodian who is moving from Buddhism to Christianity in Tacoma, Washington. The COM should have the sensitivity to know when to appoint an advocate who can act as a bridge person for both the aspirant and the COM. If there is any doubt it would be far better to find an advocate than to leave the person without any cultural support.

DETERMINING CONTEXT OF INTERVIEW

COMs are asked to become more creative in how interviews are to take place. The logistics of a meeting on Tuesday afternoon, in the Cathedral library maybe overwhelming to someone who comes from modest surroundings. First, they may need to lose income by taking time off. Secondly, the church buildings which might have been designed to reflect the glory of power of a by-gone era in a Medieval Gothic style which maybe awesomeness but intimidating.

If the discernment process is to focus on identifying and recruiting persons for ministry in various cultural-ethnic settings, the interviewing environment should reflect the culture. Test one of the qualities mentioned above: flexibility. From the section on Cultural Norms note that the American Anglo-Saxon norm of “consistency” will set up resistances to breaking patterns of meeting times and places. Bishops, clergy and laity rooted in these norms will want to keep to familiar patterns and probably see no need to change. They will want “business to be conducted on their ground.” But if the issue is about recruiting people from cultures that are either under-represented or not present at all in a given diocese, then consideration should be given to meeting these people within their own home. This first meeting has very subtle implications: Is the church leadership asking them to leave their cultural roots? Having them meeting on the leaders’ home turf is the first step in cultural adaptation. However, if the church leadership is committed to authentic diversity then it needs to be guided by values of flexibility and expansion of cultural awareness first of its own membership before imposing this condition on the nominee and their community. Why not meet where the vocation from God has arise and is alive? If that cannot be done, meet for lunch or dinner in a restaurant that is typical of that ethnic community. In most affiliation cultures a meal together is a prerequisite for any important discussion. This is being culturally competent. Then you can returning to the meeting house. It is essential to affirm the culture of the individual as the first step in moving towards discernment.

PERSONAL AWARENESS IN THE INTERVIEW

A member of the COM coming from an ethnic background that has been a minority in the dominant culture will be bi-cultural, see the dynamics of both cultural at play. For the rest of the members, unless bi-cultural themselves, the cultural assumptions will be based on more

individualistic performance values than communal values. In most cases person coming from an affiliation culture will be much more rooted in preference to community consensus rather than self-promotion. Several points should be kept in mind:

- Learn that the persons of other communities will become comfortable only after there has been a period of "talk story", as the Hawaiians say. There must be a warm up period, which may be over dinner or some informal setting. The individual performance model would be after a few words of introduction to move directly to the question, "Tell us about your call to ministry?" or "Why do you want to be a priest?" Do not expect much of a result because relationship building is required before personal information can be shared.
- Learn to pay attention to the interpersonal dynamics of members of that culture. Even handshakes can be inviting or offensive if you are not aware of the cultural protocol. Observe and explore how roles are defined, obligations and duties are specified. They will be possibly much more definite than your own.
- Know something of authority is exercise in the other culture and the role of men and women in relationship to authority. Regardless of your own bias and desire for cultural transformation remember you are beginning a relationship and a man may be offended if a woman is perceived to be above him. If you are in a lead position ask someone else to chair the meeting if you cannot get beyond this potential cultural clash.
- Attitudes and behaviors can change, but change takes along time. Change begins when we take people where they are in their own cultural orientation.
- Do not use yourself as a yardstick. You will be much more effective in horizontal relationships than vertical. Horizontal relationship will explore family and community members. Vertical relationships will be concern with how many people someone knows, what status the have and where they are place in a hierarchy of authority.
- Emphasize harmony and cooperation, help the person from another culture that may have exposed too much or many a social mistake to save face. Avoid confrontation. The individualistic norm of analyzing and directly digging at a person's motivations will have an adverse effect on the nominee and will probably bring the interview to a halt.
- The person from another cultural background may come from a place of extraordinary and modesty. It will take time for them talk readily about their strengths. Usually, this will be in a small group after some one on one conversation that rehearses what might be shared more publically.
- Know that *status* in the person's culture is usually based on age, sex, family name, place of birth rather than on accomplishments.
- Know the status of men and of women in the other person's culture. No matter how

convinced you are of equality between the sexes, this interior value may block open communications with the nominee. If you are addressing the opposite sex it is very important to know the status of your sex in the eyes of the person. .

- While you may strive to relate to everyone as an equal persons of other cultures may accept more readily a hierarchy of importance and defer to someone more easily than yourself. More-than-likely, people in authority in the other person's culture have more power and are less accountable than people in your own culture.
- When you meet a person from another culture for the first time expect the social behavior to be more formal than you are used to in your own culture. The behavior will be polite, correct, but not especially extroverted.
- Do not jump to conclusions when the other person makes what appears to be a strange suggestion or statement. This is indication of other cultural norm operating from your own. Try to stay open to get more information.
- The relationships between Whites and Indigenous Americans or African Americans can be challenging depending on the setting, the location of the diocese and its history between these two or three cultural groups, and the consciousness of both members of the COM and the nominee. Reserve and even defensiveness or anger may emerge as a protective reaction to deep seated cultural trauma of both the individual and in the inheritance of the diocese. Any attempt to downplay or swept this away will only make the interviewing process more strained.

QUESTIONS

Have each member name one issue from this section that the COM needs to address:

- List on newsprint or white board
- Ask: What other issues are not listed
- Prioritize the list talking about the assumptions in giving preference of one over another
- Strategy building: What steps can the COM make to address this issues?

How can this strategy be developed into an on-going process of moving towards great cross cultural competency?

Research Suggestions for Background on Cultural Relationships in the Diocese or Region:

- What was the date and name of the first non-White ministry established in the diocese? Who were the leaders
- What was its mission and ministry focus?
- What has been its development? If it is not continuing, why did it die?
- How many cultural groups exist between where you live and where you work or

worship?

- How many are within the diocesan boundaries? List by name/locations
- How many languages are spoken and used in the services of worship in the diocese?
- What is the diocesan mission imperative for cross cultural minis
- try development?

What do you think should be the next step for the COM toward becoming cross culturally competent?

APPENDIX I

AN ALTERNATIVE TRACK FOR ORDINATION TRAINING²⁹

by
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An "Alternative Track" to ordination is not the lowering of standards in order to ordain persons for ministry from non-Euro-American backgrounds.

The tremendous ethnic changes in the society, as well as, in the church have made evident the need to develop a more effective way of doing mission. The process of developing these "more effective way" challenges the church to train persons of color to be engaged in ministry among and with the growing diversity of people.

One of the most central facts of our current training procedure is that "ethnic" persons when sent to seminaries become "de-ethnicized," resulting in either high attrition rates in our seminaries, or the loss of identity of a person's culture and background. This process renders them unable to minister to the very people who encouraged them to seek ordination.

We are at a crossroads in the church. We find ourselves in the midst of a missionary crisis. The mission field is no longer thousands of miles away in some foreign country. It is in our midst. There are two paths that we can consider. We can choose to let some other denomination respond to the call to ministry to people who have never been apart of the Episcopal Church, or we can choose to respond by preparing leaders from among the various cultures to be trained for the ordained ministry. Each path is a viable option. But we must choose. If we do not, then we are playing games with ourselves and with the lives of these new peoples who are migrating into the United States by the millions.

²⁹ In "Meeting on New Ground: Cultural Diversity in the Ordination Process" a section on "Dispersed Theological Education and several models in the Appendix can be found. However, Carmen's ground breaking program continues to be a viable model for theological education and is mirrored in the Native Ministry M.Div Program at Vancouver School of Theology, in British Columbia, Canada.

³⁰ Carmen Guerrero is now serving at Canon Missioner to the Bishop of Arizona (2009)

Should we choose to respond to this evangelistic opportunity by becoming intentional in being inclusive, we need to do so responsibly. The first step is to see that the education that we provide for in the preparation of these persons is relevant to the context of their ministries. This can be done while satisfying the canonical requirements of the church and does not mean lowering the requirements. And alternative route is just that - another way of accomplishing the same goal - i.e., the preparing of persons to minister to the people of God in such a way that they are cared for, taught the faith, healed, led in worship, etc.

The following suggestions for training are more than theory. At the present time the Diocese of Los Angeles is involved in a process of implementing a new alternative track to ordination. We have initially entered into an agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in their effort to provide an alternative route to the ordained ministry for some Hispanics-Americans.

The ELCA recognized that there are persons who by reason of age or prior experience can be approved for ordination with an M.Div. degree. Included in this category are those persons who, by reason of specific life experiences and recognized leadership qualities, have the gifts for ministry that are needed by the church. Many are "indigenous" spiritual leaders with particular gifts of ministry and life experiences who can assist the church in developing the critically needed leadership for ministry in Asian, Black, Hispanic and Native American communities. "Recognizing that leadership is the gift of God to the people of God gathered in diverse communities," the Lutheran Church sought to affirm and utilize the gifts of those persons whose experience is needed in the ordained leadership of the ELCA. The program which the Diocese of Los Angeles has entered into is deemed adequate preparation by the Lutherans for full ordination. This is not a parallel to our Canon 9 clergy.³¹

The curriculum has some obvious variations because of the differences between denominations. Therefore, what follows is the Diocese of Los Angeles' adaptations:

1. The Hispanic Missioner, in conjunction with clergy involved in Hispanic ministry identify potential leaders who might be responsible students in the program.
2. A Mentor System has been implemented to provide support for the students. The Hispanic Missioner meets with them on a weekly basis of classroom mentoring. The assigned material they are reading is reviewed, questions asked, discussions entered into, and research information shared. The Mentor provides further knowledge from other resources in order to enhance the topics of the day.
3. The students are placed at a church and are involved in 20 hours of ministry per week. The rector or vicar at the placement site serves as a ministry mentor for the student.

³¹ By action of the General Convention of 2003 the beginning revision of Title III (Ministry) Canon did away with the two tiered designation ordained person (Canon 7 – seminary trained and Canon 9 – locally trained and restricted)

4. Each mentor is to provide a report to a sub-committee of the Commission on Ministry as to the status of the student. This sub-committee also serves as shepherds to the students.

5. The students are evaluated from a variety of perspectives. Once a month a professor from the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley comes to evaluate the student's work. The rector/vicar at the church where the student is placed together with the mentor and the Commission on Ministry sub-committee all become evaluators. If it is decided that the student needs more work in any particular area, then steps are taken to accommodate for this need.

The Lutheran Church has established what they call a "Candidacy Committee", which we call the "Sub-Committee on the Commission on Ministry". This sub-committee includes representatives from the Commission on Ministry, the Ethnic offices, and the Christian Education office. Our task is to develop and implement policy for this program that includes criteria for entrance, processes for future training, procedures for testing for ordination that includes a method of interviewing for each stage in this track.

CURRICULUM

This track is designed as a three year program. However, it is anticipated that some students will need more than three years. At each stage of the training the sub-committee, the professor or mentors may determine that the student needs more background and formation in one or more areas. At that point additional course work will be assigned.

The core courses are taught by professors from PLTS in Berkeley who come to Los Angeles each semester and spend 15 hours of classroom time with the students. The Episcopal courses will either be taught by instructors from the diocesan school of theology (Bloy House)³² or possibly from the Church Divinity School of the Pacific.³³ This is still being negotiated. During the summer the students are expected to go to Berkeley for a one week course of classes at the seminary.

The curriculum includes the following:

YEAR ONE

Introduction to Old Testament

³² Since the first writing of this resource Claremont School of Theology in the Diocese of Los Angeles has come into being offering degrees in theological education.

³³ CDSP has developed the Center for Anglican Leadership and Life (CALL), as well as, Academia Teologica Latina with the Diocese of California. Neither programs offer extension degrees or diplomas as the Lutherans

Introduction to New Testament
Introduction to Lutheran Confessions
(Substitute: Anglican Studies at Bloy House)
Introduction to Systematic Theology

YEAR TWO

Old Testament Prophet
Preaching
Pastoral Counseling
Christian Education
Liturgics
(Substitute: Anglican Liturgics)
Pauline Letters

YEAR THREE

Church History
Preaching II
Ethics
Church Polity
(Substitute: Anglican polity)
Systematic Theology

As stated earlier this is a new and to some degree pilot program for the diocese. The details are still being worked out. What we do know is that the training of "indigenous" persons for ministry is imperative for the mission that is before us. It is beyond the scope of this resource to describe all the other alternative track training models in the church. However, diocese should pursue correspondence with the Diocese of Alaska, Nevada, Navajoland, South Dakota, as well as, dioceses in Province IX. These have pioneered new models of ministry and training for many years and are worth knowing about. The Vancouver School of Theology in British Columbia is a leading institution for pioneering alternative training for the ordained ministry including awarding an M.Div. by extension. Likewise, the Instituto Pastoral in New York has developed an important model working with Hispanics in Province I and II. Contact the various Ethnic Ministry desks at the Episcopal Church Center (800) 334-7626 for further information.

APPENDIX II

A DIOCESAN STRATEGY³⁴

by
Hartshorn Murphy³⁵
Archdeacon for Mission
Diocese of Los Angeles

THE PRESENT DILEMMA

Something needs to happen prior to a discussion of the need for new diocesan strategies towards greater inclusivity in the ordination process. The way is pointed to in the reason this resource was called to be written. The focus must be on the members of those gate-keeping commissions who are being asked to be more culturally sensitive. We are begging the question if we assume that these groups are composed almost exclusively of persons who are drawn from the ranks of the initiated (the ordained) and from a dominant class and culture? If the consciousness about needs of ethnic and social minorities in the past this resource would not have been needed.

WHERE DOES CHANGE NEED TO OCCUR?

ACCESSIBILITY OF MEETINGS

Let us state an underlying assumption of a culturally competent diocese: Commissions on Ministry should reflect the social and ethnic variety geographically present within diocesan borders in addition to the baptized, the deacons, the priests, and bishop. For this to occur meetings need to be accessible.

An analogy: A parish Rector suggests that the third Tuesday evening Vestry meeting be changed to the second Monday at 10:00 A.M. He wants to have more free evenings at home with his family.

If this was seriously proposed a cry of outrage would be lifted up. Such a move of time would disenfranchise a significant percentage of the parish family. Only retired persons, a small

³⁴ "Meeting on New Ground: Cultural Diversity in the Ordination Process" has several sections that expand on Hartshorn's original work on diocesan strategies. This work, however, remains a valuable basis for further strategies.

³⁵ Hartshorn Murphy is now Rector of St. Augustine's-by-the-Sea, Santa Monica, California

percentage of women not working outside of the home and executives with discretionary time would be able to serve. This is precisely what many dioceses do routinely by scheduling mid-day, mid-week meetings for the benefit of the ordained, thus eliminating the input and insight from those very classes of persons to whom we claim a need to be more sensitive to.

PREFERENTIAL STRATEGY FOR CRITICAL MASS

For anything to change there must be more than a third of any body comprised of non-whites. This is what is cited about as the necessity for critical mass. Most diocesan conventions are eager to elect to positions of leadership non-Anglo lay people. Yet routinely, year after year, few are presented for election to the major policy making boards, committees and commissions. Instead we see a dual pattern of leadership. Minorities are elected and appointed to program and task groups (e.g., ethnic and social justice groups, educational task forces) which meet evenings and Saturdays. At the same time policy making groups remain largely White and upper middle class except for token representation by minority clergy (e.g., standing committee, COM, diocesan councils, corporation boards). Again, these meet during working hours.

WHY IS THIS NECESSARY?

If we are serious about moving towards a more diverse clericus, then we must first move to deal with the apartheid of the Commissions on Ministry. Their function is to decide on the suitability of candidates for the vocational diaconate and the sacred priesthood. A Vietnamese candidate will feel more support from the COM, not because white church leaders have had a cultural sensitivity workshop (as helpful as that is), but because there are Asian faces and voices seated at the table of judgment. Should conventions fail to elect a representative group, the Bishop must have the authority to appoint persons who will bring balance to the commissions.

THE PRESENT STRATEGY

The central question: What is the context of ministry and is the candidate suitable?

Throughout this resource we have looked at what sorts of persons the church needs for leadership in the future, both lay and ordained. Less dramatic but as real is the growing awareness that ordination does not confer ministry, but is recognition of existing ministry. As the recovery of the catechumenate causes us to recover the central ministry confirmed at baptism, so increasingly COMs look to candidates who present themselves for postulancy who already are engaged in ministry beyond altar service. The question being asked is not if the candidate is suitable for ministry, but does the ministry suit (fit as a suit) the candidate?

SHIFT IN CONTEXT

The problem is that many Rectors and Vestries are not able or willing to evaluate adequately those men and women who claim a Call. On one side there is the perennial subjective problem that takes the form of political heat generated when rejecting well connected members or their sons and daughters is more than many priests can bear. On the other side is the fact that many clergy are unaware of the seminal shifts that have occurred in the church and community. They are insecure in their own roles of leadership and thus suspect that they are unfit to make such a

judgment. Lay leaders, similarly, feel uncomfortable with a lack of objective, publicly agreed upon qualifications and when pushed, either rubberstamp the recommendation of the Rector or let the system decide.

LOSS OF CONTEXT IN THE FACE OF AN EVERY-INCREASING COMPLEXITY

Once the discernment of a person's calling leaves the context of that ministry, and has not had a thorough and substantial airing, the reliability of subsequent perceptions and judgments becomes questionable. The first person to receive the aspirant is the bishop. Put in an impossible position they may quickly defer to the COM, which makes a judgment typically based on psychological and academic suitability. This often is done in a single interview where increasingly the weight in judgment is based upon the success in a previous profession. The COM, made up of good and decent people, tends to select who reflect themselves. These persons are then sent off to a residential seminary where their Call can be tested. Seminaries, under the graduate school model, are only involved in part of responsibility to test the call. If the judgment of suitability has been deferred all along the way, then the COMs rely on the Graduate Ordination Exam. Three years and thousands of dollars later, this exam becomes the final analysis of the Call.

A FUTURE STRATEGY

THE MINISTRY DISCERNMENT YEAR³⁶

We begin with a theological shift that has gradually occurred in the church. As stated earlier, increasingly ordination is being seen as recognition of ministry rather than an admission to ministry. Some dioceses, aware of the inability of the home parishes to engage in a rigorous and objective screening process, have moved to a ministry discernment year. There are several purposes for this initial stage:

- 1) Spend several hours a week in an assigned congregation,
- 2) Be exposed to a variety of ministry situations,
- 3) Be evaluated by a priest as well as a lay committee in an ongoing way,
- 4) Participate in a series of reflection classes with others in a discernment year.

Detractors from the program suggest that it is unreasonable to assume that a person can enter into a community, other than their own, and establish themselves as a leader in a relatively short period of time. And yet, this is precisely what new curates are routinely asked to do.

³⁶ The Discernment Year has been adopted in recent years by many dioceses, most notably San Diego.

Over time a more consistent form of evaluation with supervising clergy could emerge. This would require a training module for supervisors to be developed by the COMs. Of necessity would be the establishment of reflection communities within the ethnic or racial background of the individuals. This could increasingly allow aspirants greater access to ministry opportunities in which their leadership gifts can be tested.

BI-CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS A HEAVY BURDEN

The problem which arises in relation to our non-white aspirants is a unique one. Suspecting that Episcopal clergy must be able to relate to and be effective in the dominant church, non-white aspirants are routinely assigned to white testing parishes for their discernment year. Removed from the security of their home culture and church community, anxiety naturally arises. Often they are less fluent in understanding and speaking English and, therefore, fear they will be judged too harshly for their inability to be accepted as leaders.

BEING PATRONIZED

Equally devastating is to be simply patronized and passed along. This is as devastating as keeping people out of the system. Increasingly we look at the qualities needed for the priesthood or diaconate as being represented in a person who is a leader capable of raising up and nurturing followers. If in the discernment year they are placed in a situation where they are expected to be bi-cultural, then language and cultural barriers may prove impossible to reach a clear reading of the person's ability. The individual can be hurt, even unknowingly, by the people being served in the alien culture. Conversely, the ethnic group can be offended by the poor image that the nominee has presented outside of his or her culture.

SAME OR DIFFERENT CONGREGATIONS?

The preference of assigning ethnic minorities to the same ethnic group congregation is obvious. The creative option may be to place them in a congregation of another denomination if there is not a second congregation in the diocese of their own ethnic background. Similarly, while in seminary non-Episcopal congregations could be recruited as field work venues for student placement.

Each individual must be considered separately. In some cases a seminarian will choose to do a discernment year or take a field education assignment in a totally different culture other than their own. It may be important for a minority student to work in a white congregation as a part of their becoming culturally competent. This is certainly true for white students. But these are very different issues than undergoing an evaluation for suitability for the ordained ministry.

SHEPHERDING

Most dioceses have a shepherding program for persons in the ordination process. Such regular contact can be especially helpful if, having successfully navigated the ministry discernment year and being admitted to seminary, the diocese can shift from a screening mode to a support mode. The seminary should not be put into the position of being the primary screening stage. The

student should be expected to continue to grow in seminary, or an alternative track. But the primary purpose of seminary is to form the postulant through deepening theological reflection and community life. It should be assumed that the person has already identified as being called and gifted by God to the ordained ministry of the church. The assignment of shepherds from one's ethnic group, even if these persons be a part of an advisory committee of mentors to the COM, can be especially helpful. One cannot underestimate the benefit of such shepherds to those candidates enrolled in residential seminaries that are bereft of minority faculty advisors.

THE GENERAL ORDINATION EXAM (GOE)

In recent years the Graduate Ordination Exam has been seen as less of a matter of "passing the bar" and more as one point of reference in a stream of evaluation processes. To be useful as such, it would be wise to move the GOE forward so that having been taken earlier, students might seek to be strengthened in those areas where they are deficient during the senior year. To be an adequate tool, options need to be available to make the GOE available in languages other than English and the questions set in other cultural contexts. When necessary there should be supplemental or replacement options available at the local level that are more culturally sensitive. There needs to always be the option of taking the exams orally, not only for non-whites, but for those in all backgrounds who are learning disabled.

POST ORDINATION TRAINING

In many dioceses, there exists some form of post ordination training. It is to be desired that such a process be two years in duration and that the expectations of the diocese be clearly articulated to both aspirants and post ordination supervising clergy. The focus should be both on spiritual formation and maintenance, as well as, skills development. These courses should be taught by seasoned, experienced clergy and laity. Some rectors may be reluctant to allow their newly ordained curates to participate in the program in fear that it turn into a "rector bashing group". Such airing of frustrations is natural, but it can be seen within the natural development of the newly ordained. We need to explore the need of pulling together, if only quarterly, these mentoring rectors for the task of mutual learning and support. The value of placing newly ordained deacons as curates with mentoring rectors and vicars is so great that dioceses would be well served by supplementing salaries with grants where necessary. Sadly, the need for mentoring is so acute for minority priests that many non-white clergy never have the luxury of serving as a curate before assuming leadership as priest-in-charge. It is a grave error. Our most difficult mission fields are recipients of the least experienced clergy.

A FINAL WORD: DEPLOYMENT

It has been noted earlier that many non-white clergy fail to recruit for the ordained ministry. They are ambivalent. In part this is due to the shifting role of clergy in minority communities. Unrealistic expectations or lack of adequate support forces these clergy to discourage aspirants, or at least commend them to explore other professions first. Key to this dissatisfaction is the perception by minority clergy that in their careers they will continue to make a number of lateral moves between marginal congregations or be a permanent pioneer.

The goal of cross cultural deployment need not be abandoned. But we need to be more intentional about all the details, including deployment. Minority clergy need more exposure in positions of leadership in national, provincial and diocesan structures and events. White rectors need to be encouraged and even financially enabled to call non-white associates. Search committees need and deserve adequately trained consultants who can help them get in touch with their needs in a new priest. This most certainly means beyond race or ethnicity. Interim priests-in-charge need to be appointed by bishops with a view of exposing white congregations to non-white clergy leadership. The whole church needs to explore the option of initial, provisional election of all rectors so that congregations might begin to risk more in their election in a climate of mutual annual evaluations and accountability. As long as tenure is an issue, congregations will be fearfully reluctant to experiment across racial and ethnic barriers.

In the end, however, we need to examine the motivation behind the frustrated desire of minority clergy to serve in "cardinal white parishes." In all hierarchal institutions which certify value from the top down, all clergy see election to prominent, moneyed congregations as a symbol of success. Having labored without recognition in the most dangerous and difficult part of the vineyard as a pioneer, one naturally desires later in life to come safely home to a place with sufficient resources to do ministry. They want to do this free of dependency upon grants from without or grim determination from within the congregation. They want the firm foundation of historical establishment so that the church does not feel provisional. We all desire, in the end, to arrive. The pyramid, however, gets narrower at the top and increasingly competitive. The closer to the top fewer and fewer priests of color will be seen. The playing field is not level.

Can we expect to see the next generation stronger? I think so. But we must develop alternative tracks in preparation and formation for ministry as needed. In this Decade of Evangelism more resources and alternative models need to be available for congregational development and church growth. Clearer visions for leadership must be brought into place about the role of missionaries in our society and not maintenance workers. Let us plan for larger, more financially stable non-white parishes possessing an articulated and lived mission to redeem, with Christ, community and family life. Only in this way shall the morale of minority clergy ultimately be fed from below, opportunities be available from above and the ability of non-white clergy to recruit future candidates be renewed and empowered.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. When does your Commissions on the Ministry meet and where?
 - a. What is (or was) gained and lost by changing the time to be more accessible to working people?
2. In the shepherding relationship is the responsibility on the candidate or the shepherds' shoulder?
 - a. Is it possible for our shepherds to visit seminarians annually?
3. What are the gifts of ministry we need to test for during the discernment year and how shall we train supervising clergy to test for them?

4. Will your diocesan polity allow non-white pre-seminarians to be deployed in non-Episcopal congregations during the discernment year in order to test the Call for ministry?
5. Enumerate the skills which seminary education fails to provide that can be experienced in post ordination education.
 - a. What training resources are available in your diocese?
 - b. What is available ecumenically?
6. Which strategies are available to enable greater inter-cultural minister deployment in your diocese?
 - a. What blocks and enables the implementation of these strategies?

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