

Being Multicultural, Becoming Intercultural – Executive Summary

September 29, 2011

Preamble: All ministry can be said to be “ethnic” according to its original meaning of “nation” or “people” in general. The risk in using the term “ethnic ministry” in the Diocese of Toronto is to think about it as something other than mainstream, as something below standard or not fully Canadian.

This report challenges the Diocese of Toronto to take the next step from “embracing diversity” toward becoming truly intercultural, by crossing the boundaries of race, ethnicity, culture and language and actively seeking to be transformed in the process.

Introduction: The report of the Ethic Ministry Consultation Committee was written as a response to concerns identified and raised by the College of Bishops of the Diocese of Toronto. The Committee saw its role as (1) responding to the Bishops’ concerns; (2) challenging the Diocese to move from being a multicultural church to one that is intercultural, that is, open to mutual change and transformation; and (3) monitoring progress until a permanent structure for implementation is in place.

Recommendations are in three sections:

A. Promoting Ethnic Ministry within an Intercultural Framework

The Diocese’s commitment to a vision of multiculturalism appears to be receding in recent years. We invite the Diocese to reinvigorate its commitment to embrace diversity within an intercultural framework in these areas:

- Diocesan policy and procedures – adopt a Policy on Anti-racism and Cultural Sensitivity Training; and place Toronto within the global Communion and adapt our procedures to accommodate people of different language and culture;
- Liturgy and worship – using Pentecost and diocesan events as opportunities to model diversity;
- Ecumenical Relations – recognizing that ecumenism can be an effective way of promoting and learning from others about approaches to multiculturalism;
- Newspaper and Website – seeing these as vehicles of language and ethnicity that can be broadened to reflect our reality;
- Theological Education – using the colleges in Toronto as resources for educating clergy in cross cultural competencies and exposure to diversity.

B. Supporting Ethnic Congregational Development

We recognize that Canada is a country of First Peoples and immigrants, that the Anglican Church is a worldwide communion, and that the Greater Toronto Area is a place of changing demographics requiring short, medium, and long-term attention and support.

We would like the Diocese to adopt an official and sustainable strategy for ensuring the long-term commitment of funds, leadership, and support for ethnic ministries. Practically, we recommend the formation of an Intercultural Ministry Committee with the staffing and operating expenses required for it to function as part of an official sustainable diocesan strategy. We further recommend the establishment of an Intercultural Partnership Fund to support ethnic congregations, promote interculturalism, and support ethnic leadership and ministry.

We propose that ethnic ministries be understood and treated as examples of “Fresh Expressions” or the “mixed economy” church. We offer different models for locating and resourcing ethnic congregations within current parish structures, as well as criteria and scenarios for effective and sustainable ethnic congregations. We outline criteria and processes for non-Anglican worshipping communities who seek to become part of the Diocese of Toronto.

C. Welcoming and Raising Up Clergy to Serve in Ethnic Ministries

The last section of the report discusses the question of whether clergy coming from other countries, cultures or language groups are suited to exercise ministry in the Diocese of Toronto. We specify that procedures for validating the ministry of newcomer clergy need to be hospitable, culturally sensitive, and aware of power differences and the potential for racism.

We consider issues of receiving newcomer clergy and raising up candidates from within ethnic congregations under these headings:

- **Training and Education.** We spell out the areas of responsibility for the diocese, the clergy arriving to serve ethnic congregations, and the congregations themselves. The principles are ones of fairness, realism, and balance, always aiming for movement toward equality and independence.
- **Compensation.** We acknowledge the challenge of compensating clergy coming from other countries, cultures or language groups to serve ethnic congregations. We urge the Diocese to make provisions in its budget and strategic plan to offer financial assistance to congregations seeking to become self-sufficient over time.
- **Postulancy.** We emphasize that candidates from other countries, cultures, and languages should be similarly qualified to other clergy when being considered for ordination. They should have a working knowledge of English. Throughout the candidacy process they should be supported by someone familiar with their country or culture of origin, and be assured of the cultural sensitivity of their interviewers.
- **Raising up Vocations.** We appeal to the Diocese to take its responsibility seriously for recruiting new leadership and for making a strong case to the young women and men in ethnic communities to consider a vocation to ordained ministry.

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