

ABSTRACT

Anglican theology conceives the call to the priesthood as consisting of an inward and an outward call. The inward call is often fostered by people who act as inspirers and mentors as well as by dreams and visions. The outward call is shown by the acceptance of church officials manifested in ordination and by the support of the community in which the priest serves.

Women and blacks were part of the church's ministry from the very beginning, but by the time the Anglican branch of the church came to the West Indies in the late seventeenth century, they were firmly excluded from the priesthood. This situation changed in the nineteenth century when blacks were ordained for missionary work in West Africa and then returned to serve in the West Indies. Further changes came in the late twentieth century when women who had been serving as deaconesses were finally allowed to become priests.

The Church in the Province of the West Indies at the beginning of the twenty-first century has a largely black clergy and a growing number of women priests. This has been caused by profound changes in the theology and practice of the Anglican Church in the Caribbean, and will lead to changes that are even more far-reaching.