



RACIAL JUSTICE TODAY

Churches' Commission Racial Justice Network
Winter 2007 Vol. 2 No.1

**we are free
- but not
equal**

So said the Revd Jesse Jackson, veteran civil rights activist and twice a former US Presidential candidate, visiting London and Oxford in November as the guest of the Churches Racial Justice Network.



More pictures and further reports on pg 4-5.



Migration forces a fresh look at theology

A Global Platform for theological reflection around the topic of migration brought together representatives of agencies from six continents. Convened by the World Council of Churches, the consultation in Geneva considered some central themes of Christian theology, such as the nature of humanity, the nature and mission of the Church and a theology of place, in the light of the impact of international migration.

In a creative and wide-ranging

discussion over four days, the 30 delegates highlighted the significant impact of migrating populations upon the host community. Receiving societies routinely confront migrants, many of whom have been forced to move because of conflict and political repression or to escape the worst effects of poverty or climate change, with restrictive immigration policies that divide families, deprive migrants of basic necessities such as primary healthcare and collude with the underlying racism and xenophobia of the more settled majority.

The humanitarian response of churches and other agencies often fails to take sufficiently seriously either the increased demands on infrastructure or the effect on local culture that is triggered by the arrival of significant numbers of migrants. Culture, the group was reminded, is dynamic rather than static and is constantly being re-formed by the spirit of God. When the cultures of migrating and settled communities are brought together, both are changed.

Negative responses to migration often result from the inability to embrace cultural change.

Another striking feature of the debate was the different perspective on theology offered by migrating and receiving communities. Delegates discovered that whereas "receiving" theologies tended to emphasise hospitality and inclusion as responses to migration, from a "migrating" perspective the accent falls more on justice. If God is perceived to be primarily constant or "settled", certain pastoral and theological stances will prevail. However, if migration rather than permanence is considered to be the norm both in human experience and in God's own nature, the outcomes may be very different. Strong voices in the consultation directed attention to the God who "became flesh and blood and moved into the neighbourhood." (John 1:14)

The World Council of Churches intends to continue this theological reflection by means of an email network. Access this via www.oikumene.org

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By Andy Bruce,
Manager of CRJN

So much to learn

A reflection on Matthew 15:21-28



This is never more so than in the matter of how people of different backgrounds relate to one another and to God. As someone relatively new to professional work in the field of racial justice, I have painfully been made aware that I should never trust my assumptions about people, never think that my own perspective is any more than a convenient personal starting point and above all, that I can never generalise without both getting it wrong and, most likely, causing offense. I must always be willing to change my opinion, re-draw my perspective and view each new encounter as an opportunity to enrich my own understanding. I now believe this willingness to be challenged and to learn is a prerequisite for anyone in this line of work, whatever their background or heritage.

"I have been sent only to the lost sheep of the people of Israel." As Jesus meets the Canaanite woman, he seems very sure of his geographical, religious, cultural and ethnic perspective. We imagine his tone of voice to be firm and authoritative. Because she represents a group that is not the focus of his mission, this woman must understand that she can never be his priority, however great

her need. No doubt this was the view of the disciples, who urge Jesus to be straight with her and send her away.

The Canaanite woman is not only desperately seeking help for her daughter, she refuses to be intimidated and persists in calling attention to her

After reaching a certain age, sometimes it goes against the grain to be reminded how much we have still to learn. Yet because of the immense complexity of the world we live in, we all need constantly to be learning. It's one of the characteristics of being human.

situation by speaking to Jesus directly. What are we to make of his reply? "It isn't right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." Jesus appears to extinguish her hope with a statement reinforcing a cultural and religious limit to his work. And for once his gift of finding a telling metaphor lets him down. If the children are "the lost sheep of Israel", who are "the dogs"? Such insensitivity from one renowned for reaching out to the dispossessed seems astonishing.

The woman refuses to be put down. In her rejoinder she returns Jesus' analogy with interest. "That's true, but even the dogs benefit from the leftovers that fall from the table." Her words force Jesus to

reconsider. Her confident faith and unflinching assurance seem to reveal to Jesus the narrowness of his own position. He needs a different perspective, to travel not just physically to Tyre and Sidon but also intellectually to a place where his own background does not impose such a false limit. Impressed and disarmed, he admires her faith and heals her daughter.

Some interpretations see this conversation as a test for the woman's faith. Surely his understanding could not be as culturally limited as the story seems to imply? Surely Jesus must have been intending to heal the child all

along? I see it differently. For me, keenly aware that I am conditioned by my own upbringing, the idea that even Jesus may occasionally have had to eat his words and repent of a judgement that was too hasty is a profound comfort. Far from needing a role model who rides above the limits of any one cultural and ethnic perspective, I respond better to a Guide who sometimes needs to be challenged and is prepared to learn from someone who speaks her truth courageously. Infallibility may, for some, be a necessary mark of the Son of God. Being willing to learn is a sign of true humanity. Jesus and I have that in common.

appointments make their appointments and to ensure a good ethnic mix on the new Network. "Over the years, CCRJ has been extremely well-served by its Commissioners," said Andy Bruce of the racial justice team. "We want to make sure that we retain not only this great wealth of practical experience in the racial justice field, but also the strongest possible involvement of the Churches in this vital work."

What's in a name? CCRJ becomes the Churches' Racial Justice Network

The Churches Commission for Racial Justice was founded in 1991 as Churches Together in Britain and Ireland emerged from the disbanded British Council of Churches.

Sixteen years on, after a lengthy process of review, CTBI has reached the point where semi-independent Commissions are not the best vehicle to take forward the shared work of Churches Together. For this reason, CCRJ is changing its name and its structure to become the Churches' Racial

Justice Network from the beginning of 2008. Policy, strategy and management of the racial justice team will be the responsibility of the Trustees of CTBI, informed by the Network, which will consist of representatives from each part of Britain and Ireland. Appointing members to the Network will become the task of the ecumenical instruments in Scotland, Ireland, Wales and England, all of them directly accountable to the Churches.

Guidelines will help the ecumenical

ABOLITION, ANCESTORS AND ACTION!

Christianity and slavery - these words seem irretrievably linked together.... for the best and the worst of reasons. None of us has been able to avoid the focus this year on the issue of slavery and the many events marking 200 years since the passing of the act to abolish the transatlantic slave trade.

Controversial commemorations

Even before the year started the commemorations were already dogged by controversy. Was it to be a celebration or a commemoration? Were we to apologise? If so who was to apologise to whom and for what? How were we to tackle our pain and anger, our shame and guilt? The issue is complex, controversial and therefore emotive.... and this personal story is only a tiny snapshot - a small part of a very large jigsaw that is still unfinished!



William Pitt

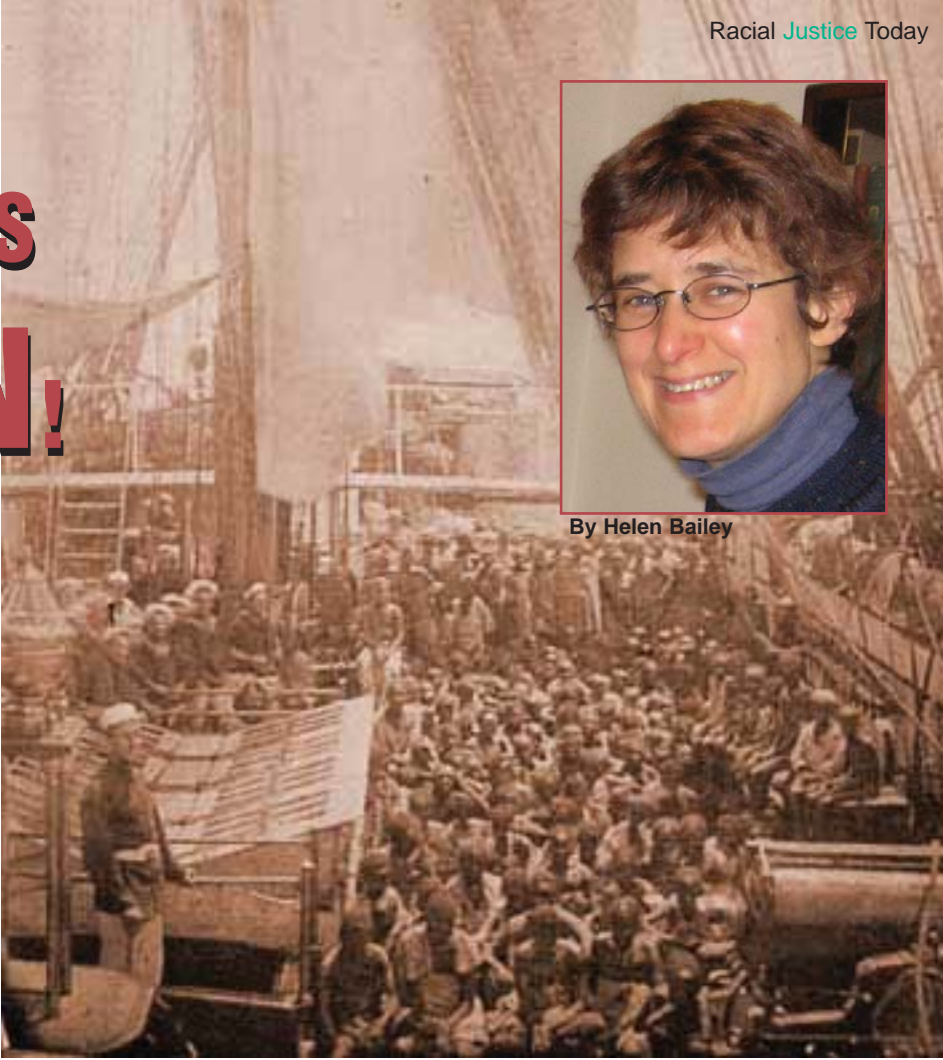
Common connections

Through personal interest I got involved in a range of activities during this year and also discovered personal connections with the evangelical

activists (down the road from me) in Clapham whose faith inspired action for change which supported William Wilberforce in his vital role in the, ultimately, successful campaign. And the man and I share something in common as we were both born in Hull. Wilberforce became MP for Hull and Yorkshire and had a London base in Clapham. On gaining a more vital faith Wilberforce became an active member of Holy Trinity church on Clapham Common where the rector was John Venn - my great, great, great, great, great uncle!



William Wilberforce



By Helen Bailey

Remembers what happened back then, reflects on the local, and her personal, connection, and invites you to respond to an issue that still continues today...

During this year I've stood under the Wilberforce oak at Holwood, Kent where the MP agreed with his friend prime minister William Pitt to take on the campaign, I've sat in the Palace of Westminster listening to recorded renderings of Wilberforce's most powerful speeches, attended arts events, conferences, exhibitions, services and followed slave trails in London and Hull...

The most difficult and unsettling event, for me, that I attended this year was at London's City Hall on the role of the Church in the transatlantic trade. I was one of the few white faces in the auditorium and the atmosphere was charged and you could feel the deep pain and hear the real anger of many of the people there.

The only white contributor was heckled. But it gave me a strong sense that we were all in this together, we had to continue the struggle and this was acknowledged by some others there too.

Unfinished business

Slavery is unfinished business - many battles have been won but the war's not over yet. Therefore it's impossible to separate what happened 200 years ago from what's still going on. For me living, working and worshipping in a multi-ethnic context, the bicentenary focus has been challenging. I have had plenty of opportunities to reflect on my feelings and reactions to all that has happened. I have felt, more than at any other time, acutely aware of my own heritage as a white, middle class, British-born female from a line of social-activist evangelical Anglicans! I have felt sadness, pain, anger, confusion, shame, guilt, but in coming through that afterwards some relief and some pride at what was achieved - and remembered this year.

Helen Bailey is an active member of Holy Trinity and St Matthias church, Tulse Hill, not far from Clapham. She originally trained as a journalist and now teaches English to speakers of other languages.

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

What is your personal reaction to the bicentenary events that have been taking place over the past year?

Agents of social change



who had encouraged "sub-prime" loans to poor families and were now foreclosing at an alarming rate. Proposing a positive alternative, Rev Jackson described the strategy of his Rainbow Push political movement, soon to be launched in the UK, to buy enough shares in the top 50 companies to allow shareholders to attend annual general meetings and hold companies to account for their discriminatory policies - and he encouraged Churches to do the same.

Throughout his address, Jesse Jackson highlighted the responsibility of churches to



that failed to connect worship and prayer with the realities of life where the poor "work harder for less, travel further to work, live under stress and don't live as long."

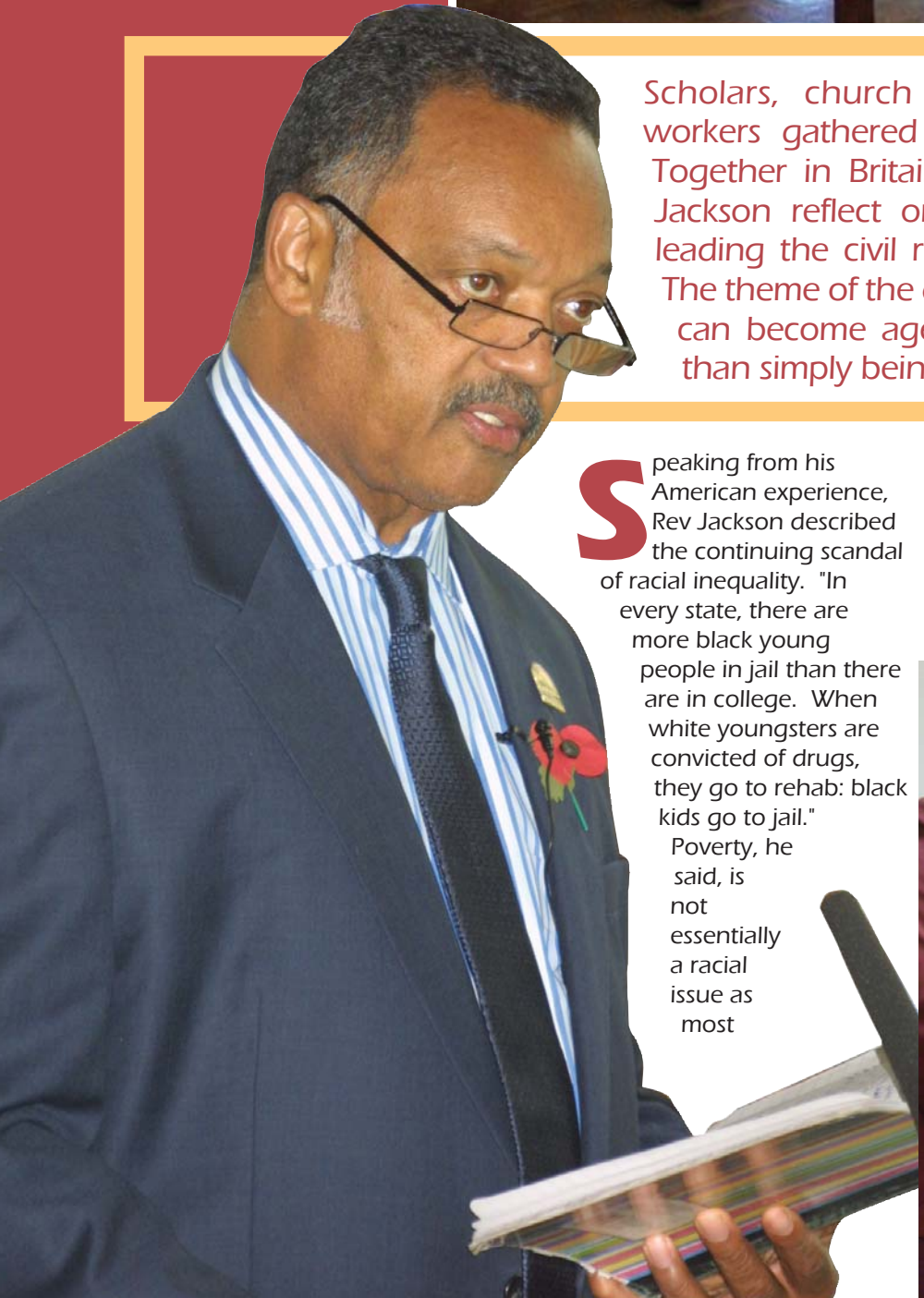
Following the "theological conversation" which had been organised by the racial justice team of CTBI as part of Jesse Jackson's four-day visit to London and Oxford, there was

Reaching for Excellence

"An organised minority can become a working majority." This was the message of renowned US civil rights leader the Revd. Jesse Jackson when he addressed members of the Entitled to Excellence network on his recent visit to London.

Grass-roots activists from churches and other community groups were excited to have the opportunity of benefiting from Jesse Jackson's international experience, gained over four decades in the vanguard of the struggle to achieve equality and economic justice for black communities.

Encouraging his audience to organise themselves in order to reach the legitimate goals



Scholars, church leaders and racial justice workers gathered at the offices of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland to hear Jesse Jackson reflect on over 40 years experience leading the civil rights movement in the USA. The theme of the discussion was how Churches can become agents of social change, rather than simply being purveyors of social service.

Speaking from his American experience, Rev Jackson described the continuing scandal of racial inequality. "In every state, there are more black young people in jail than there are in college. When white youngsters are convicted of drugs, they go to rehab: black kids go to jail." Poverty, he said, is not essentially a racial issue as most

poor people are white. However black communities often suffer disproportionately from economic disadvantage, as shown by the mortgage crisis currently enveloping the US, which he described as "a tsunami heading your way." He was strongly critical of US banks



address the central issues of justice and equality and criticised a style of church life

an opportunity for press interviews. One of the more unusual requests was from pupils of a predominantly black school in North London who spent several minutes grilling Mr Jackson for the school magazine they produce. According to all reports, they were some of the toughest questions he had ever faced!

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

Hosting a visit by a high-profile dignitary can be both demanding and expensive. What do you see as the benefits and the drawbacks of such visits?



still denied them by majority society, Jesse Jackson pointed out that despite this year commemorating the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade, black people may be free, but are not yet equal. Achieving this equality should be the ultimate aim of Entitled to Excellence, he suggested.

Entitled to Excellence is the black and minority ethnic leadership programme of the Churches' Racial Justice Network - formerly CCRJ. For more details look under Our work/racial justice/leadership development on the Churches Together website: www.ctbi.org.uk

THE Consultant's VIEW

Some Seasonal and Poetic Advice to Help You Make a Great Start to 2008

2008 is now upon us
So let's make a success of the year
I wish you success for all your projects and endeavours
So some advice you must now hear

To start I will quote from Rudyard Kipling
He said it so very well
As soon as I heard it, I got immediately thinking
This advice to you all I must tell

"I keep six honest serving men
(They taught me all I knew)
Their names are what and why and when
And where and how and who."

So these are the questions you must answer
When making the business plan
These are the things that if explained correctly
Potential funders will readily understand

Also, building a team is absolutely essential
Don't be tempted to go it alone
One-man projects rarely reach their potential
And stay in the twilight zone

Here at DMC we do lots of training
And for you we'll always go that extra mile
So we advise you to spend some time in 2008
Building your corporate profile

I mean fax numbers, phone numbers, web and email
As well as, how your phone gets answered
I mean office address and dealing with mail
To avoid embarrassing disasters

So I wish you a happy and prosperous new year
That brings you a wealth beyond just money
So my cryptic wish for those with an ear
Is that you get both the milk and also the honey



Amal Douglas is Senior Consultant at the DMC Consultancy
<http://www.dmcconsultancy> specialising in fundraising advice to charities and social enterprises. He is also the main contributor to the Consultant's view blog and podcast: <http://www.consultantsview.co.uk>



Glasgow builds capacity

Momentum is building among minority ethnic congregations in Glasgow. Following a visit to the city by Andy Bruce and Claudette Douglas of the racial justice team of CTBI at the end of 2006 and after other meetings involving Action of Churches Together in Scotland, representatives of several congregations met in October at the Chat House, home of Heart for the City - a group supported by the Racial Justice Fund.

Top of the agenda was the question of how minority ethnic congregations can engage more fully with cross-denominational initiatives such as Hope 08 and relate more effectively to the ecumenical structures. Addressing the meeting, both Nelu Balaj, racial justice officer of ACTS and Andy Bruce, Executive Secretary for racial justice with CTBI, stressed the significance of confident participation by black majority churches and their leaders in Christian life in Scotland. They highlighted the myth of ethnic uniformity in Scotland, calling on the traditional churches to recognise the energy, faith and vision to be found in minority ethnic members of their congregations, as well as working more closely with the newer congregations, many of which have an African or Asian ethnic identity.

Rev Lukas Njenga, founder of Heart for the City and Scottish Episcopal Church Chaplain at Caledonia University in Glasgow, praised the efforts of many new churches to reach out to their Scottish neighbours and called on them to foster strong partnerships with other local churches. "A multicultural city needs a multicultural church," he reminded delegates.

A working group involving representatives of the Glasgow congregations and of ACTS is now meeting to design a constitution for a new "Association of Minority Ethnic Churches."



One In Christ - delegates at the Glasgow capacity building day in October

What a difference a day makes

One minute I was an unsuspecting innocent, rigorously put through my paces on a Drama Workshop lead by Rev Claudette Douglas (CCRJ) and the next minute (or to be fair the next several months) I was helping to organise and run a short Christian Drama Course. How can that happen? Well, when you meet with an inspired and energetic teacher, then anything can happen. And Claudette was every ounce of that! She fanned into a flame a puttering pilot light and something significant changed inside me that day.

Meeting with Claudette again in London a couple of months later, she encouraged me to move forward with a drama group, offering help and support materials from CCRJ. On contacting other members of that Drama Workshop (part of an Inter-faith day in Belfast during May 2007) we arranged to meet over the summer.

Scott Boldt, Reconciliation Officer at Edgehill Methodist Theological College, and Dr Paul Rankin, Lecturer in Spanish at University College, Dublin and myself, a Registered Psychotherapist (all based in

Belfast) met together to hatch a plan for an inter-denominational drama group.

As a first venture we decided to test the waters with a short 5-week course, using drama to explore issues such as trust, identity, the 'Other', forgiveness, culminating in an improvisation evening centred around a meal together. With a group numbering between 9-12 people on each of the 5 evenings, we began with a 10-min film clip to set the theme, followed by drama games to loosen up and then particular drama exercises devised to challenge the group and tease out the sinews of the theme for that evening. Over the course of the 5 weeks we changed our venue each week, so that the group were taken into Methodist, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic settings, which would have been unfamiliar territory for most. Relationships were forged across the denominational divide through creatively working together, facing challenges and perhaps most importantly - having a laugh.



Mary Cairns

Laughter crosses many divides. The group appeared keen to take this work/play forward and we are now planning to organise a second course in the New Year. We will explore in further depth some of the more pressing issues raised over the course, especially that of forgiveness. During the evening spent focused on forgiveness several poignant experiences and insights emerged.

What seemed to surprise the group most was just how much fun the course was. For me personally, it was play-time, in the most freeing and creative sense of the word. It proved to be a great way to have one's assumptions challenged and to learn new ways of seeing and relating. It struck me that drama, for the most part, is able to bypass the intellectual, compartmentalised thinking processes, and bring learning into a bodily experience, imprinting itself in a real and visceral way that is remembered in the body and emotions and not just 'in the head'.

Claudette has been pivotal in setting alight a passion in me to explore personal, social and faith issues through the medium of drama. It's not likely to be everyone's cup of tea, but I've come to recognise that it sure is mine....2 sugars please!!

Mary Cairns

Young People Matter!

A youth organisation in South London, Young People Matter, was funded by the Racial Justice Fund in September 2007. Their senior Project Worker, Adelaide Awuku writes:

Our grant from the Racial Justice Fund enabled us to take 10 young people skiing to train them for our main ski trip to the French Alps in 2008. We took them not just as a means of entertainment but to also give them an experience that they would never have achieved on their own.

Most of our young people are black and live in areas where one can say they are disadvantaged. They are talented but rarely have the opportunity to shine and are only seen as a result of their surroundings. These young people are often dismissed in this society because of the stigma that is attached to their culture and heritage; however, the training trip gave them a breath of fresh air and empowered them to motivate themselves and each other. The skiing



YPM's young people and young people from other organisations with their medals for completing the training successfully.

experience taught them life skills, worked on self-esteem and showed that they are capable of achieving the same things as their more advantaged peers.

Four different groups of young people attended the training sessions

and this enabled them to meet and make friends with others from a different culture. Yes, the difference is noticeable first hand but there is one thing that they all have in common: the ability to perform and to reach their potential. As our mission statement states, we are Helping young people unlock their full potential and in so doing, Bringing hope to the next generation.

Young People Matter want to give thank the Racial Justice Fund for allowing us to give young people a life enhancing experience!

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

How could you help to promote friendships between people of different ethnic backgrounds?



A question of Integrity: BNP and the Clergy

Although the police have, quite rightly, faced major criticisms about institutional racism, I often find that it is in the church that the more intractable problems exist. Once the problem has been identified, police services, and particularly the more senior officers, usually take the issue very seriously and establish clear procedures to deal with it. In the church there tends to be a denial of the problem. There is a mistaken assumption that the church is somehow magically freed from basic human

Let us be clear about the nature of the British National Party. In the 2005 General Election campaign, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in an open letter to the leaders of all political parties, had asked that the campaign should not become a competition about who can most effectively frighten voters with the prospect of "The Others".

characteristics including racism.

An example of this difference between the police and the church involves rules about membership of the British National Party and similar organisations. At the February 2005 session of the General Synod of the Church of England, a priest from Blackburn highlighted that the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) had formally adopted a national policy that police officers are prohibited from being members of the British National Party. The priest wanted to know whether the Church of England

intended to follow this excellent example by creating a similar policy in regard to clergy and candidates for ordination.

The Bishop responsible for selection and training replied that to draw up a list of political organisations incompatible with being in the ordained ministry would take the church into new and problematic territory. He said it was hard to believe that someone who held the views espoused by the BNP would persuade a selection conference of their fitness to be trained

for ordination.

In fact no one had suggested drawing up a list of organisations. The police hadn't drawn up a list. But the police have a general duty to promote race equality. This duty was established by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act in the year 2000. They ruled that this duty is self-evidently contradicted by membership of the BNP. The question for the Church of England is, do clergy similarly have a 'general duty to promote race equality'? Such a duty for clergy is not based on any Act of Parliament, but few would doubt that it

When are political views incompatible with the Christian gospel? When those views amount to a clearly racist agenda, asserts Vasantha Gnanadoss. A member of the General Synod of the Church of England, and currently working with the Metropolitan Police, she has urged the Church to outlaw membership of or support for the BNP among those seeking training for ordination.

is equally clearly established as a gospel imperative and would be contradicted by membership of the BNP.

Let us be clear about the nature of the British National Party. In the 2005 General Election campaign, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in an open letter to the leaders of all political parties, had asked that the campaign should not become a competition about who can most effectively frighten voters with the prospect of "The Others". In its manifesto, the BNP appealed to what it called "the native peoples of these islands - the English, Scots, Irish and Welsh". It based its appeal on fear of the impact of other ethnic groups. The BNP is intrinsically incapable of accepting the Archbishop's plea.

I was disappointed that the Church did not seem to take the issue seriously, so I decided to do something. I wrote to all the diocesan bishops. I quoted from my own experience as a pastoral selector at clergy selection conferences. This led me to believe that, in the selection process as a whole, there is inadequate examination of candidates' attitudes to the multi-ethnic church and the multi-ethnic society which they would serve. I also wrote an article that appeared in the Church Times newspaper.

Eventually I was asked to be a member of a small working group that met to examine the issue. This group recommended that the issue of race and diversity should be addressed as early as possible in the selection process for clergy; that clear guidelines should be drawn up for all concerned; that the criteria for selection should be amplified to specifically mention racist attitudes,

and that training Institutions should be asked to address the issue of racism and diversity early in the basic training of ordinands.

I hope this example may encourage all of us to be alert about how institutions to which we belong handle diversity. It shows the importance of Christian organisations keeping up with the best practice elsewhere. And it shows that, even when we feel powerless, we may be able to think of ways to get some thinking started. We may be surprised at the more realistic human response that institutions are capable of making.

Now that some changes are being made in the selection and training areas, I have followed up at General

Synod with a private member's motion on 'Race Equality'.

That this Synod, noting that in 2004 the Association of Chief Police Officers adopted a policy whereby "no member of the Police Service, whether police officer or police staff, may be a member of an organisation whose constitution, aims, objectives or pronouncements contradict the general duty to promote race equality" and "this specifically includes the British National Party", request the House of Bishops to formulate and implement a comparable policy for the Church of England, to apply to clergy, ordinands, and such employed lay persons as have duties that require them to represent or speak on behalf of the Church.'

The motion was first published at the July 2007 sessions of General Synod and attracted 55 signatures. The next opportunity for signatures will come at the February 2008 sessions. In order to be debated it needs to get 100 or more signatures by the end of the July 2008 sessions. I would like to ask any readers of Racial Justice Today who know members of General Synod please to encourage them to sign the motion.

by Vasantha Gnanadoss

Vasantha Gnanadoss works in the Strategy Unit of the Metropolitan Police and is also a member of the General Synod of the Church of England and of the Committee for Minority Ethnic Affairs.

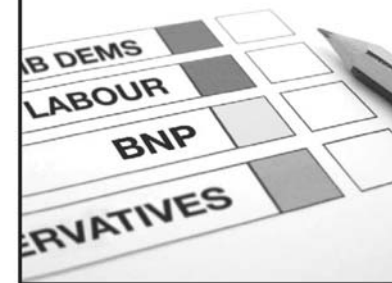


CHURCHES' RACIAL JUSTICE NETWORK

The racial justice team of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
(Formerly Churches' Commission for Racial Justice)

RACIAL JUSTICE & THE BALLOT BOX

Exploring a Christian Response to Far-Right Political Parties



To the alarm of many people, including almost all Christian denominations, the British National Party has made gains in local elections in recent years. This paper seeks to help Christians ask important questions about far-right political groups like the BNP and articulate a strong and informed response, based on the Christian belief that all people are created as **one** race, the human race.

Far right politics - why should Christians be concerned?

"On its website, the BNP asserts that Britain's proud history of glorious achievements demonstrates that the British genotype is a valuable one and deserves to be preserved."

While a small number of mixed marriages - or mixed race children - in Britain won't, in themselves, make any difference, if this is encouraged however as it is at present by politicians and the media then inevitably the traditional British genotype will be endangered in the long-term."

(BNP Web site - October 2007)

Most Churches shy away from instructing people on how to vote but are agreed that the racist policies and philosophy of the British National Party are incompatible with Christian faith. Far right political groups, of which the British National Party is the prime example, often make "British-ness" a central motif in their policies, but many Christians believe there is something far more sinister underlying this emphasis.

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

What do you think is the appeal of the BNP to some people, and what can be done to counter it?

Racial Justice and the Ballot Box

Concern among racial justice advocates about the activities of the British National Party remains as strong as ever.

Responding to a number of enquiries, Churches Together has revised and reissued its advice to Churches on this issue.

"Racial Justice and the Ballot Box" warns about the policies and tactics of the BNP, which has made alarming electoral progress in some areas. The document spells out many of the statements made by virtually all Christian denominations about racist politics and features a list of discussion questions to help congregations unravel the issues. A list of further resources is also included.

Copies may be ordered from Margaret Pattinson, Administrator, Churches Racial Justice Network, 3rd Floor, Bastille Court, 2 Paris Garden, London SE1 8ND. (Free of charge, although a donation to cover postage would be appreciated.) Alternatively a free copy can be downloaded from the website: www.ctbi.org.uk/CB/14

Integration emphasis in the Republic

The government has also proposed a Task Force on Integration. But action has not been limited to government: Churches have also been at the forefront to work to build a united community. Funded by the Department of Justice, the Parish Based Integration Project is working with congregations at the local level in an attempt to find a middle way between 'assimilation' and multiculturalism.

It aims to boost mutual integration activities in parishes, assist churches in identifying and implementing models of good practice and create a central resource to give practical support to those parishes wishing to make progress on integration.

Speaking at the final meeting of the old-style Churches' Commission for

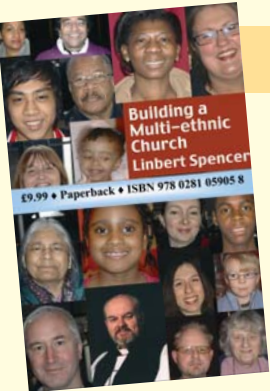
Increased levels of migration are having a profound impact not only in the UK but also in the Republic of Ireland. One response by the Irish government has been to appoint a new Minister of State for Integration, working across three different government departments.

Racial Justice in Dublin, full-time worker for the Project, Adrian Christea explained that the emphasis is to get away from the old model of expecting the new arrivals to be the ones making all the changes, but rather to encourage a two-way response. He commented that those congregations which choose to offer a genuine welcome to migrants are experiencing real growth.

Parishes are offered ten key integration guidelines. These include analysing the local circumstances, making the church buildings more attractive to new people, nominating specific people to welcome newcomers and using plain English in services to help those whose knowledge of the language is limited.

Congregations are also encouraged to use music that reflects the diversity of the congregation and to share meals together and celebrate different national festivals.

For more information about the Parish Based Integration Project, contact Adrian Christea by email: adrian@iccsi.ie



Book Review . Book Review . Book Review . Making the Church more like heaven

... "Many churches in Britain and Ireland have people from different ethnic backgrounds in the congregation and feel this makes them a 'multi-ethnic' church. But there is often a failure to understand the difference between allowing people to participate in the Church, and actively seeking the participation of those who are not already doing so. People become complacent about the way things are, and do not realise how wonderful they might become."

So writes Linbert Spencer in his new publication *Building a Multi-ethnic Church* (SPCK 2007). The purpose of the book is to encourage church leaders to declare that they value ethnic diversity and to develop programmes of action designed to teach and encourage all church members to recognise the value of diversity.

Now running his own consultancy specialising in diversity and equality, leadership, performance management and personal effectiveness, Linbert's background

is in Community Development and in the 1980s he worked as the Police Community Liaison Officer at Greater Manchester Council.

He is the author of the "Diversity Pocketbook" (2004). Other published work includes "Breakthrough: Create Your Future" (1999), and "How To Create Inclusive Environments" (2000). In addition to a number of professional and voluntary roles and running his own consultancy, Linbert has been a member of the Churches Commission for Racial Justice for a number of years.

Andy Bruce, Executive Secretary of the racial justice team of CTBI commented, "Linbert Spencer is a positive and creative diversity practitioner who has his feet firmly on the ground. His passionate commitment to building a more just and inclusive church shines through this book, which is a wonderful tool that will help local congregations move beyond being 'hospitable' to people of different backgrounds to become role models and beacons of hope for the wider community."



Linbert Spencer is an international consultant, trainer and coach specialising in diversity and equality, leadership, performance management and personal effectiveness.

Author of the 'Diversity Pocketbook' (2004), one of the publications in the 'Management Pocketbooks' series and 'Building a Multi-ethnic Church' (2007) SPCK, Linbert's other published work includes "Breakthrough: Create Your Future" (1999), 'How To Create Inclusive Environments' (2000). He has also contributed to many other publications.

In addition to a number of professional and voluntary roles and running his own consultancy, Linbert has been a member of the Churches Commission for Racial Justice for a number of years.

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT
To what extent is your local congregation multi-ethnic? What about others in your area?



We are children of our past. I believe that we were created by God, who gave us this planet to share with justice and equality, and that our eternal purpose is to stand in the gap on each others behalf. But we also share a mortal past with a legacy of its own. We on these British islands have inherited much, but that wealth, status, power and knowledge came at a price: the consequence of slavery and colonialism. What right do we have to this wealth?

We cannot afford not to have a global understanding of our world, yet in our schools the teaching of world history is patchy to say the least. We want global produce in our local supermarkets, but what is the cost of our demand driven lifestyle? As we enter 2008 I ask us to consider our personal global legacy and the impact on the poorest and most vulnerable of our incessant need to have more.

As parents, teachers, pastors and carers, custodians of the future, we cannot continue to accept our children's and our own a lack of knowledge about who we are and what our legacy has been to the world. We have an obligation to study and to develop a deeper understanding of ourselves. God has brought to our shores the descendents of those who were dehumanised, colonised, enslaved or robbed, as well as those who were empowered, cared for and educated. Whilst I may not fully understand your journey or comprehend all you have endured, I believe that each one of us is capable of the empathy that comes with the gift of compassion. When we lack personal compassion for ourselves, it is because we do not value who we are and who God intended us to be. We become harsh, self-critical and self-defeating, full of doubt, depression and sadness. We waste away the divine potential we were given at the very birth of creation.

What an ideal time for us as one people

Whose past is it anyway?

under God to reflect collectively on the journey so far, and find peace in our shared experience in order to value our common humanity.

Without understanding the impact of the past, how can we expect to tackle the present, much less plan and pray for the future? Perhaps our unacknowledged past is the reason why there was no apology for slavery from either the British or the Irish Prime Minister this year. Without public repentance of the costly legacies of slavery and colonialism, the human institutions of government (or church) will never represent God on earth, but only self-interest, fear and greed. Each is capable of being both totally mortal and totally divine. To repent and forgive is pure God!

The world is waiting for those who are truly led by the spirit of Jesus Christ. Our history came at a price which is still rising. Working near to Blackfriars Bridge, one is reminded of a past built on marine supremacy and ruthless enslavement of other races. The tall spires and lofty buildings of the City hide a shameful past. A past that remains unacknowledged will come back to haunt us all. In personal terms it becomes a corrosive and disempowering neurosis; in national terms, it is a time bomb, incendiary, angry and volatile.

Let us pray that in 2008 we will have the courage to address our legacy, past and future, mortal and eternal, so that every human heart may come alive as hope is renewed and faith strengthened.

Reverend Claudette-Athea Douglas: Research and Development Officer, CRJN. For more information about grants from the Racial Justice Fund, training or project development, email: claudette.douglas@ctbi.org.uk



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CCRJ works with the churches of Britain and Ireland to promote racial justice. Among the many strands of its work are the Racial Justice Fund and Racial Justice Sunday, both highlighted in this publication. We are always looking for new partners: please contact any of the CCRJ team using the details listed above.

The editor reserves the right to cut submitted text in order to fit - for the benefit of design.

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In order to make Racial Justice Today as fresh and relevant as possible we need YOUR input!

Please tell us about racial justice work in your local area, advertise your events and publications in Racial Justice Today, and respond to stories we have covered in each edition.

Any views expressed in Racial Justice Today are those of the individual authors or of the editorial group acting as individuals and not of the publishers.

Please order additional copies of Racial Justice Today from the CCRJ office.

To advertise in our forthcoming publications or to respond to any features in RJT, please send letters to the editor via the address above.

RACIAL JUSTICE: A thoroughly good cause!

Racial Justice Today would like to encourage your group, whether you are a community organisation, congregation, house group, youth group or whatever, to raise money for racial justice work.

Since 1991 the Racial Justice Fund of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland has helped to translate our passion for racial justice into practical action. Grants up to £5000 (for local projects) or £10000 (for national organisations) have had a major impact across Scotland, Ireland, Wales and England.

But the Fund is shrinking, and we urgently need to reverse

this trend. That is where YOU can make a difference. By organising a fundraising event in your church or local community or simply by making a personal donation, you can help to ensure that groups at the front line of work for racial justice have the resources they need.

Please send your donation to The Racial Justice Team, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Bastille Court, 2 Paris Garden, London SE1 8ND. (Cheques payable to CCRJ Racial Justice Fund, please!)

We would also like to hear about your local fundraising event. Please write to Claudette Douglas at the above address, with photos if possible.

Raising money for a good cause can be a wonderful activity for any group. It gets people working together, fosters a sense of common purpose, encourages creativity and generates publicity for the group.

RACIAL JUSTICE TODAY



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Racial Justice Think Tanks

On 12th Dec 2007, The Churches Racial Justice Network along with its partner CUF X launched the first in a nationwide series of events called Racial Justice Think Tanks.

These Think Tanks will take place in specifically designated areas where the Churches Racial Justice Network is forming national and regional HUBS, or Racial Justice centres of excellence.

The Think Tanks will bring local groups together to look at best practice explore the obstacles community and voluntary organisations face and seek new ways of being community and better

patterns of support. We have formed this partnership with The Church Urban Fund to develop what we hope will become a powerful grass-roots forum for change, collecting data and making representation to national and local government as well as to third sector funders and others.

One outcome we are looking for is to form local consortia that can jointly bid for funds to develop projects that would be delivered by the different organisations.

For up-to-date information about dates and venues please contact: claudette.douglas@ctbi.org.uk

PROVISIONAL THINK TANK DATES

Jan 31st	East/ North London
Feb 21st	Cardiff
March 27th	Manchester
April 17th	Birmingham
May 22nd	Glasgow
June 19th	Bristol/Gloucester
July 17th	Belfast
Aug 21st	Leeds/Humberside
Sept 18th	Sheffield/ Derby/ Nott's
Oct 16th	Newcastle/ N.E.
Nov 20th	Liverpool/ Merseyside
Dec 11th	Southampton/ Portsmouth