



The General Synod voted today to apologise for racism experienced by black and minority ethnic people in the Church of England since the arrival of the Windrush generation.

Members unanimously backed a motion to 'lament' and apologise for conscious and unconscious racism encountered by 'countless' black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) Anglicans arriving in Britain from 1948 and in subsequent years, when seeking to find a home in the Church of England.

Synod expressed 'gratitude to God' for the 'indispensable' contribution to the mission, ministry, prayer and worship of the Church of England made by people of BAME descent.

Members voted to redouble efforts to combat racism and to work towards greater participation of BAME Anglicans in all areas of Church life.

Synod member Revd Andrew Moughtin-Mumby, from Southwark Diocese, speaking to introduce the motion, highlighted the experiences of the family of his parishioner, Doreen Browne.

Her mother, father and sibling were barred in 1961 from entering St Peter's Church in Walworth, south London, 'due to the plain fact of the colour of their black skin', he told the Synod.

"They eventually found a home in a nearby parish church - but we know that many cradle Anglicans from the Caribbean did not, and simply left the Church of England: that is a scandal of our own," he said.

"Doreen's family suffered a horrible, humiliating racism which still affects Doreen's relationship with the Church even today."

He added: "Any apology that we, the Church, can give, must lead to urgent change in our Church; concrete change. And this is not just about the Church's past."

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, speaking in response to Fr Moughtin-Mumby's speech, said he was 'sorry' and 'ashamed'. He told the Synod that there was 'no doubt' that the Church of England was still 'deeply institutionally racist'.

He said: "We did not do justice in the past, we do not do justice now, and unless we are radical and decisive in this area in the future, we will still be having this conversation in 20 years time and still doing injustice - the few of us that remain, deservedly.

"We have damaged the Church, we have damaged the image of God and most of all, we have damaged those we victimised, unconsciously very often."

In a break with tradition, the General Synod paused for a moment of silence and were led afterwards in prayer by the Bishop of Newcastle,

Christine Hardman, in response to the speeches by Father Moughtin-Mumby and the Archbishop.

Bishop Christine said: "We pray for all who have suffered from the evil of racism and discrimination, we pray for those who were deported this morning and, for ourselves, we offer our profound sadness at our sinfulness and we ask for forgiveness."

The Bishop of Leicester, Martyn Snow, told the Synod he had experienced a warm welcome from churches across the world in contrast to the reception experienced by the Windrush generation.

"All at sea culturally, turning to the one place they thought they would be welcomed and offered hospitality, only to find they were shunned."

"So, to those who say, how can we apologise for the actions of a previous generation – I say, this is not just about previous generations – the impact continues today."

Here is the wording of the motion backed unanimously by the General Synod:

Windrush Commitment and Legacy

That this Synod, commemorating in 2018 the martyrdom of the Revd Dr Martin Luther King, Jr., noting with joy the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the Empire Windrush liner in the United Kingdom in June 1948 bringing nearly 500 Commonwealth citizens, mainly from the Caribbean, to mainland UK; and the eventual arrival of approximately half a million people from the West Indies, who were called to Britain as British subjects to help rebuild the post-war United Kingdom:

- a.** lament, on behalf of Christ's Church, and apologises for, the conscious and unconscious racism experienced by countless black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) Anglicans in 1948 and subsequent years, when seeking to find a spiritual home in their local Church of England parish churches, the memory of which is still painful to committed Anglicans who, in spite of this racism from clergy and others, have remained faithful to the Church of England and their Anglican heritage;
- b.** request the Archbishops' Council to commission research to assess the impact of this on the Church of England in terms of church members lost, churches declining into closure, and vocations to ordained and licensed lay ministries missed, and to report back to this Synod and the wider Church."

- c.** express gratitude to God for the indispensable contribution to the mission, ministry, prayer and worship of Christ's Church in this nation made by people of BAME descent in the Church of England;
 - d.** acknowledge and give joyful thanks for the wider contribution of the 'Windrush generation' and their descendants to UK life and culture in every field of human activity, including service across the Armed Forces and other services during and after the Second World War; and
 - e.** resolve to continue, with great effort and urgency, to stamp out all forms of conscious or unconscious racism, and to commit the Church of England to increase the participation and representation of lay and ordained BAME Anglicans throughout Church life;
 - f.** request the Archbishop's Council to appoint an independent person external to the Church to assess the current situation as regards race and ethnicity in the Church, in order to present a report to this Synod with recommendations for actions to achieve reconciliation and authentic belonging so that we can move towards truly being a Church for all people;
 - g.** to the greater glory of the God in whose image every human being is made.
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