



n the Church of England has got under way, with the Archbishops of

The Anti-Racism Taskforce will carry out preparatory work ahead of the launch of the Archbishops' Commission to address racism in spring next year.

The nine members of the group will make recommendations for immediate action that can be taken by the Church of England to improve its record on racial justice and equality. They will also recommend the proposed remit and membership of the Commission.

Jointly chaired by Revd Sonia Barron, Director of Ordinands and Vocations for Lincoln Diocese, and Revd Arun Arora, a Vicar in the Diocese of Durham, the Taskforce is expected to complete its work by the end of January.

Revd Sonia Barron, Co-Chair of the Taskforce, and a former adviser to the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns, (CMEAC) said: "The Taskforce has been set up at a critical time in the history of the Church of England, with the Black Lives Matter movement pushing racial justice right up the agenda. The Church has an opportunity that it cannot afford to miss – we cannot just pay lip service to issues of racism as we have done for so long. It is vital that we listen to all the different voices out there and having listened, fulfil our mission as a Church, by taking appropriate action."

Revd Arun Arora said: "For more than thirty years the Church of England has been talking about racism, making recommendations and passing resolutions. Despite this the Church remains a place which is poorer for the lack of participation of all God's people in the fullness of its life together. The time has now come for urgent implementation and action. The purpose of the Taskforce and Commission will not be to produce more reports but rather to directly address the sin of racism and those impediments that prevent the Church from fulfilling its call so that racial justice is both done and is seen to be done."

The Taskforce and Commission, a joint project by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, were announced earlier this year amid rising concern about insufficient progress towards racial justice, equality and inclusion within the Church of England.

There are five serving bishops from UK minority ethnic (UKME) backgrounds currently in the Church of England. But there are no diocesan bishops currently from UKME backgrounds, following the retirement earlier this year of the former Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu.

Fewer than four per cent of serving clergy identify as being from a UKME background, according to the latest statistics. One in 10 of the people recommended this year for training for ordained ministry in the Church of England were from UKME backgrounds.

The General Synod voted in February to apologise for racism experienced by UKME people in the Church of England since the arrival of the Windrush Generation.

Speaking to the General Synod, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said there was ‘no doubt’ that the Church of England was still ‘deeply institutionally racist’.

**Notes to editors:**

- As part of its work, the Taskforce is examining more than 160 formal recommendations since 1985 on racial justice in the Church of England, the overwhelming majority made in reports from the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC) and its predecessor, the Committee on Black Anglican Concerns.
- One of the aims is to identify any recommendations which have not yet been implemented that could be put into force immediately.

**Taskforce members:**

- Revd Arun Arora (Co-Chair), Vicar of St Nicholas, Durham.
- Revd Sonia Barron (Co-Chair), Lincoln Diocesan Director of Ordinands and Vocations, former Adviser to Archbishops’ Council’s Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns.
- Revd Dr Anderson Jeremiah, Lecturer, University of Lancaster, CMEAC member.
- Annika Mathews, Lay Representative of the Church of England to the Churches Together England Enabling Group, former Church of England Youth Council member and Synod representative.
- Joanna Moriarty, Partner (Charities and Social Enterprise) Green Park leadership and recruitment consultancy services.
- Revd Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy, BAME Mission and Ministry Enabler (Leicester Diocese). CMEAC member.
- Ben Nicholls, Youth worker at St Paul’s, Hammersmith.
- Canon Dr Addy Lazz-Onyenobi, Deanery Lay Chair, Diocese of Manchester, CMEAC member and member of the Anglican Minority Ethnic Network (AMEN).
- Ven Neil Warwick, Archdeacon of Bristol.

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