

GENERAL SYNOD

**Windrush Commitment & Legacy:
A Background Note from the Secretary General**

What has the Church done?

The Church has long lamented its treatment of the Windrush peoples who had responded to the call to come to post war Britain and help rebuild the mother land. As a result of the rejection experienced in parish churches many of these lifelong Anglicans voted with their feet and left the Church of England, subsequently removing not only themselves but their future generations.

“.....there is a great deal of evidence that black people felt themselves unwelcome in British churches just as in many other parts of English society.....Many black Christians found in the black-led churches the thing they needed most : immediate acceptance and pastoral care, participation on equal terms, solidarity with their fellow Christians, and opportunities for their cultural and spiritual development....”

Faith in the City. A Call for Action by Church and Nation, 1985

The Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC) participated as a member of the ecumenical planning and delivery group for the Windrush @ 70 national service of thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey (June 22 2018) The group was co-ordinated by Churches Together in England.

On behalf of the Church, CMEAC's commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the landing of MV Empire Windrush was the commissioning of a 'Windrush' cope; the cope is a legacy piece to the Church. The cope has been worn by clergy around the Country and acts as a catalyst for dialogue and debate on othering, belonging and inclusion.

CMEAC was established in 1986 and is a committee of the Archbishops Council. Throughout these 34 years CMEAC has sought to advise, urge, encourage and call upon the Church to remove the barriers to full representation, participation and inclusion that many ME lay and ordained Anglicans feel and experience within the Church. CMEAC reports to General Synod that have detailed both the issues and offered recommendations for action include:

- 1991- Seeds of Hope G.S. 977
- 1994 – Roots and Wings. Report of the Black Anglican Celebration for the Decade of Evangelism
- 2000 -Simply Value Us G.S. Misc 601
- 2001 – A Good Practice Paper for Dioceses G.S. Misc 655
- 2003 – Called To Act /justly G.S. 1512
- 2007 – Talent and Calling G.S. 1650
- 2011- Unfinished Business G.S. 1844
- 2015 – I Too am C of E; a follow up to Unfinished Business G.S. Misc 1108

In addition to the multiple reports and papers that have been presented to and debated by General Synod, CMEAC has been a constant voice and resource seeking to support the Church to be 'a church for all'. More recent action and initiatives include:

Unconscious Bias training – Training in UB helps participants to consider organisational and individual attitudes, behaviours and decision making and the potential impacts for adverse effects

In 2015 CMEAC proposed a bespoke training programme in unconscious bias (UB) for the Church. The Train the Trainer programme was developed with an external organisation in 2016 and two UB 'Train the Trainer' programmes have been delivered (2016 & 2019). The trainers are equipped to use the training programme and are tasked to develop a strategy for roll out in their sending diocese and lead on championing UB training in their dioceses.

The demand for UB training has grown with many dioceses requiring that all involved in recruitment, selection and appointment must attend UB training, for example, London diocese requires that a UB training session is carried out with all parishes planning to fill a vacancy.

45 people from across the Church have completed the UB Train the Trainer programme. More than 700 UB training sessions have been delivered by these trainers across the Church.

UB training is an important tool that can help all consider and reflect on the impact of UB in decision making and especially in thinking and action associated with recruitment/selection/appointment and other leadership decisions that affect development, advancement and reward decisions.

CMEAC seeks to influence action and leadership on issues that impact on BAME communities, for example we are members of and host the meetings of the ecumenical group Churches Network for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma (CNGTR) Our 2019 GS paper 'Centuries of Marginalisation- Visions of Hope' detailed the daily racism that is meted out to Gypsies, Roma and Travellers and supported the motion for action by the Church. The motion was unanimously carried. Since the GS debate CNGTR have developed resources to support diocesan mission and ministry with and among GTR communities:

- A sample chaplaincy GTR role description was written and sent out to all diocesan bishops
- A training and networking seminar for clergy and laity ministering with and among GTR communities was held in November 2019

Governance – The need to have more ethnic diversity in the governance bodies eg, synod, boards, committees and senior bodies such as the Church Commissioners/Pensions Board/Crown Nominations Commission is well reported. It is in these places that decisions, planning, influencing happen and it is critical to inclusion, belonging, representation *and growth* that there is a diversity of thought, understanding and contribution in these processes.

Renewal and Reform (R&R) is the Church of England's programme of work, implemented by the Archbishops' Council on behalf of the House of Bishops and General Synod. The overall aim of the programme is to help us become a growing Church for all people and for all places. The R&R programme consists of eight main workstreams.

CMEAC has assisted the Renewal and Reform Programme Board with an internal audit of Renewal and Reform's engagement with people of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) heritage. Each workstream, and R&R governance itself, was assessed for what it was currently doing and CMEAC's considerations going forward were laid out.

The national Church's engagement with BAME communities to date has been substantially under-representative. CMEAC is supporting the efforts of R&R colleagues to continue and further the work of addressing this imbalance. Each of the workstreams was asked to provide details of their specific engagement with BAME communities to allow for consideration of where improvements could be made.

The examples provided here offer hope but are also a reminder of 34 years in and still a long way to go. It is estimated that ME people make up 15% of the Church's membership. However this is not reflected in clergy or lay senior roles, for example of the recognised senior clerical roles there are currently just 6 bishops, 1 dean of cathedral, 2 (+1 to be collated in March) archdeacons and 2 residentiary canons. The fact that all of the CMEAC reports and papers presented to the GS have been accepted and unanimously agreed and that there is a good level of take up of CMEAC programmes of action suggest that in principle there is general agreement that the Church needs to do more to eliminate the barriers to representation, participation and inclusion of ME people. It is the practice that it will take to do this that seems to be the greatest barrier.

William Nye, Secretary General
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