

BLACK LIVES MATTER.

**A GUIDE TO HELP
YOU RESPOND TO
RACIAL INJUSTICE**

tearfund

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On 25 May, a 46-year-old African American named George Floyd died in police custody after a white police officer knelt on his neck for a period of eight minutes and 46 seconds during arrest. The incident was filmed by an onlooker and footage shows that the police officer persisted despite Mr Floyd pleading for his life and saying that he could not breathe. George Floyd's death has triggered massive protests across the US and in other parts of the world, including the UK. An outpouring of centuries of pain and frustration has been seen in a groundswell of protest against racism in the US and globally, and a trend in the use of the hashtag **#BlackLivesMatter** on social media.

The **#BlackLivesMatter** movement includes but is not exclusive to those signed up to the official Black Lives Matter organisational demands. Tearfund has not entered into any kind of formal partnership with the Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation. We do, however, stand in solidarity with people everywhere who experience racism and speak out against injustice. In doing so, we affirm that Black lives matter.

WHY RESPOND?

As a Christian relief and development organisation, speaking up against poverty and injustice has been at the heart of our work for many years.

We know that poverty and injustice are inextricably linked. Poverty is the result of a social and structural legacy of broken relationships with God, a distorted understanding of self, unjust relationships between people, and exploitative relationships with the environment. These broken relationships not only affect individuals' lives, decisions and actions, but also create broken systems, leading to problems such as power imbalances.

Through our work in over 50 countries, we recognise the need to address injustice, including racism, if we are to bring an end to extreme poverty. We see the impact of racism on members of our staff, our partners and on many of the people we serve. So, for Tearfund, the



answer to 'Why respond?' is simple. We've been working for over 50 years to end poverty. Racial injustice and poverty are inextricably linked. Therefore, to end poverty we must stand against racial injustice.

As part of its response, Tearfund supports the wider anti-racism movement associated with **#BlackLivesMatter**. As Tearfund, we believe that all people are made in the image of God. By supporting the wider anti-racism movement, we are not saying that all lives do not have equal value. However, at this time in society, Black people suffer disproportionately and we stand in solidarity with them in calling for justice and equality for all.



In the same way that Aylan Kurdi was not the first child to drown in the Mediterranean Sea fleeing the Syrian conflict, or that Greta Thunberg was not the first student to feel angry about climate change, George Floyd is one of many African Americans to die as a result of systemic racism and the brutality of a police officer abusing his power. This is a critical moment in history.

As Christians, we are called to stand on the side of love and justice. It is not enough simply to condemn racism; our faith compels us to speak up and take action against its oppression and injustices.

We ask you to join us in praying for healing and the restoration of peace where racism has contributed to the inequality and poverty that devalues human life. Together, we can bring about change for good.

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide is part of Tearfund's response to racial injustice and the **#BlackLivesMatter** movement. We originally created the guide as an internal resource to help our workforce learn and grow in their understanding of racial injustice and its impact both on colleagues and on those we serve. It has now been tailored to provide you, our supporters – as individuals and churches – with the information and resources you need to explore issues of race and ethnicity and to take action on racial injustice.

The guide has seven sections which can be used in individual, family or group settings. The sections do not have to be visited sequentially. You are encouraged to dip in and out of the content and to take the time to reflect and come back to the sections as needed.

This resource assumes some knowledge of the issues by the user. There is a glossary to look up any unfamiliar terms but, if the issue of racial equality and the **#BlackLivesMatter** movement is fairly new to you, we suggest referring to some of the sources of information in our resources section before using this guide.

Please note that none of the lists included in this guide are exhaustive and that the views of the authors and creators of articles, books and films do not necessarily reflect Tearfund's position on theology. They have been included to provide a diverse range of perspectives as you prayerfully contemplate the issues.

TAKING ACTION

At Tearfund, we are proud of our supporters' long history of speaking up and taking action on issues of poverty and injustice. We know that this is essential if we want to bring lasting change and participate in God's work of justice. Below, we have outlined a number of ways in which you, as Tearfund supporters, can take action against racial injustice by speaking up in your church, writing to your MP and influencing other decision-makers. For these recommendations, we've drawn on the thinking and experience of influential Black Christians in the UK and on our experience of campaigning against extreme poverty and climate change. We hope and pray that these ideas will inspire and equip you to speak out against racism.

ENGAGE YOUR CHURCH

These suggestions are drawn from articles by **Ben Lindsay** and **Pastor Agu Irukwu**.

ASK YOUR CHURCH TO PRAY PUBLICLY ON RACE ISSUES.

Ask your church leader to create space to publicly and regularly pray against issues of racism in corporate settings, for the UK context and globally.

ASK YOUR CHURCH ABOUT DIVERSITY.

Ask about how diverse the leadership, staff and speaker team are and what plans there are to address lack of diversity going forward. Encourage your church to partner with ethnic minorities to inform your church's response to the #BlackLivesMatter movement and to issues of racism. If you are a white majority or white-led church, ask how you can engage more effectively with and learn from the response of Black-led denominations.

ASK YOUR CHURCH HOW THEY ARE PROACTIVELY ANTI-RACIST.

Ask whether your church is proactively fighting for equality and social justice in the context of racism. Talk to your church leadership about how you might challenge unjust structures,

systems and power dynamics, in both your own community and nationally.

ASK YOUR CHURCH ABOUT ANTI-RACIST TEACHING AND EDUCATION.

Ask if your church leaders and staff are engaging in any anti-racism education or training, and if your church is actively seeking to lead the congregation in this area. If not, suggest how the church might do this going forward (eg a book club, sermon or seminars).

ASK HOW YOUR CHURCH SUPPORTS ITS BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) NEIGHBOURS.

Could your church financially support BAME grassroots organisations that serve your community? How could your church best champion and support the work of Black majority churches in your area? Are there local anti-racism organisations and initiatives in your community that your church could partner with?

SIGN A PETITION

Petition the UK government to introduce mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting. Companies with 250 or more employees are required by law to publish their gender pay gap but not their ethnicity pay gap. Call on the UK government to introduce this to help address race inequality in the workplace. [Sign the petition here.](#)

Consider supporting some of the petitions on the Parliamentary petition website on racial justice [here](#).

Support Tearfund's *Reboot* campaign calling on the Prime Minister to cancel developing countries' debt and ensure transparency in vaccine trial agreements with developing countries. [Sign here.](#)

**JOIN A PROTEST**

Tearfund and our supporters have been part of many forms of protest over the years, from marches to stunts to prayer vigils. Taking action together can be powerful. Protests have been a key driver of progress on debt cancellation and reducing climate emissions in recent years. Tearfund does not endorse illegal activity, but we believe that peaceful civil disobedience is a valid part of a Christian response to injustice. Peaceful civil disobedience has strong theological roots, and history has shown that it has achieved social change (suffragettes, civil rights movement, anti-apartheid movement).

There have been a number of protests relating to **#BlackLivesMatter** taking place across the world. If you plan to take part in one of the public protests, please stay safe and look after yourself and others. Our advice during the coronavirus pandemic is to follow social distancing guidance as per the UK [government guidelines](#).

WRITE TO YOUR MP

Support the changes motioned by the petitions above by writing to your MP, asking them to engage. Visit theyworkforyou.com to contact your MP and find out how they have voted on different issues.

A template letter of what you might want to include can be found [here](#).

The letter asks for the following urgent issues to be raised:

- 1 The need for a plan of action following the report into BAME COVID-19 deaths, as well as other previous reviews such as the [Lammy Review](#) on inequality in the criminal justice system.
- 2 A published timeline for establishing the [Office for Tackling Injustices](#).
- 3 Cancel debt for the world's poorest (often post-colonial) countries, which will release money they can use to respond to the coronavirus pandemic and climate crisis.

BIBLE STUDIES

The following Bible studies have been written to provide you with some biblical insights to further your reflection on racial injustice.

Bible study 1 – Black lives matter: Recognising and responding to systemic racism

The murder of George Floyd in May 2020 while in police custody in the US has set in motion a global wave of protest resounding with the message that 'Black lives matter'. Why should we, as Christians, amplify this message? Should our message not be that 'all lives matter'?

Racism is rife in our societies – the legacy of generations of deep-rooted oppression and injustice that are now ingrained into our institutional structures and systems. George Floyd's death was symptomatic of systemic racism. Because George Floyd was in the US, many have dismissed this as a US issue but this simply isn't true. The US has a specific history, and therefore specific issues that have resulted from that. In the UK, however, we have our own history and issues, as do many of the countries we work in around the world. **Policing** has long been a focus of public debate around systemic racism in the UK, for example, as has our **criminal justice system**.

Yet although there are overt examples of systemic racism, it largely remains hidden from view because it has become normalised (see here for a recent opinion piece on **systemic racism**). It is entrenched in our social imagination; that is, the lens through which we make sense of the world. Therefore, unless we look for systemic racism, we don't see it, because we have become so accustomed to the way things are. We all have unconscious biases and prejudices that are conditioned by our social and cultural locations and that affect the way we view others. For ethnic minorities, and the Black community in particular, these biases and prejudices **affect their everyday lives**.

ALL LIVES MATTER VS BLACK LIVES MATTER

So why not 'All lives matter'? All lives *do* matter. This is affirmed in the biblical truth that, together, humanity was created in the image of the triune God. ALL humans are image-bearers of God, and in community and diversity we reflect more of the fullness of who God is. Nevertheless, lived experience so often does not affirm this truth, and when people within our societies are discriminated against, the image of God is defiled. To say that 'Black lives matter' is therefore to put the focus on an aspect of God's image that has not been recognised as such, and that has been neglected and mistreated. This is about seeking to right the wrong that Black lives haven't mattered as much as other lives. 'All lives matter', although true, is too often used to maintain our current status quo.

Jesus did not maintain the status quo – he disrupted it. He overturned the tables of the moneylenders in the temple, berating them for turning it into a 'den of robbers'. Jesus was challenging them for maintaining a system that they benefited from at others' expense.

Jesus also gave stern warnings against hypocrisy. In the Sermon on the Mount, we find the call not to judge others by pointing out the speck of dust in their eyes without taking seriously the plank in our own eyes (Matthew 7:3-5). In a similar vein, we need to examine our own lives to see where we might be complicit in systemic racism before pointing the finger at others.

As the unhealed wounds of historic and systematic injustice are surfacing, it is tempting to want to move to reconciliation or unity as quickly as possible. But without unearthing and challenging systemic racism, the drive for reconciliation will only lead to a shallow substitute which serves to perpetuate injustice. Genuine reconciliation is not possible without recognising and

naming injustice, addressing pain, and allowing space for lament, radical repentance and re-envisioning. We cannot rush through these stages: we need to be willing to sit in this uncomfortable place of listening and recognising, creating a space from which change can emerge.

RECOGNITION LEADS TO REPENTANCE

In Luke's gospel, a spotlight is placed on Jesus' compassion for the marginalised and oppressed. The story of Zacchaeus is messy. Zacchaeus was despised by Jewish society because of his affiliation with Rome – under whom the Jews were occupied. As a tax collector, Zacchaeus was complicit in and benefited from systemic injustice. Very often, tax collectors further exploited their place of power and authority by overcharging citizens. What stands out in this story is Zacchaeus'

response to encountering Jesus. As he is convicted of his sin, he vows not only to repay his debt, but to give half of his possessions to the poor and to pay back fourfold those he has wronged. Encountering Jesus created a 'recognition' in Zacchaeus of his wrongdoing, which led to repentance that resulted in radical action. Although we don't have insight into the process that Zacchaeus went through, we can assume that it might have been uncomfortable for him. Yet it stirred an outpouring of generosity that led Zacchaeus to go above and beyond in his response to the injustice in which he had not only been complicit, but had overtly reinforced.

BIBLE PASSAGES

Read **Luke 19:1-10** and **Matthew 7:3-5**.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Racism is a deep and complicated issue, and this one study is not enough to cover the entire topic, although we hope it is a starting point.

We have divided some of the questions below: some are for all people; some for people of colour; and some for white people. This is to reflect the different experiences based on race, and to encourage listening to one another. Some of these questions may seem confrontational or painful to answer – please only share what you are comfortable with. They have been designed to provoke honest discussion and recognition of issues, to encourage safe spaces for listening and forums for conversations that have possibly not existed previously. If you find these questions provoke an emotional response, we would respectfully encourage you not to avoid them. Perhaps you could spend some time reflecting on this in prayer and, if it helps, talk it through with others.

Before looking at the questions together, spend time asking God to open your own heart to what you need to hear from him and others. Ask God to share his heart on this issue with you.

1. RECOGNITION

QUESTIONS FOR ALL

- Was Jesus justified in overturning the tables in the temple? Why or why not?
- What was it that enabled Zacchaeus to go through an internal process of transformation (recognising and naming injustice, addressing pain, radical repentance and re-envisioning)?

QUESTIONS FOR WHITE PEOPLE

- How aware are you of the lived experience of your Black brothers and sisters within your circles of influence (church/work/family/friendship group) and in the wider society in which you live?
- Being completely honest with yourself, are there times when you might have disengaged with this issue because it hasn't directly impacted you?
- Can you think of ways in which you have been complicit in systemic racism? (This question may need further learning about systemic racism before you can answer fully.)



QUESTIONS FOR PEOPLE FROM BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS

- Have you experienced systemic racism that you need healing from?
- How does it make you feel when you do not see people of colour represented at all levels of leadership?
- Can you think of ways in which you have been complicit in systemic racism? (This question may need further learning about systemic racism before you can answer fully.)

2. REPENTANCE

QUESTIONS FOR ALL

- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you identify the plank that exists in your own eye. Are there any areas in which you need to repent?
- Why did Jesus include the challenge of removing planks from our own eyes in the Sermon on the Mount?
- What would Zacchaeus-style repentance look like in your context?

QUESTIONS FOR WHITE PEOPLE

- Where do you need to repent of the sin of silence when it comes to racism?

- Where have you seen overt or covert racism within your church or the wider society in which you live?

QUESTIONS FOR PEOPLE FROM BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS

- Where do you need to repent of the sin of silence when it comes to racism?
- Where have you seen overt or covert racism within your church or the wider society in which you live?

3. RE-ENVISIONING

QUESTIONS AND REFLECTIONS FOR ALL

- Stop and pray. Ask God to give you his prophetic imagination to re-envision our own lives and world without racism.
- Why did Zacchaeus go as far as repaying four times what he had cheated from others?

QUESTIONS FOR WHITE PEOPLE

- What elements of society do you benefit from that are a result of historical, systemic oppression and injustice?
- What would an appropriate response to such injustice look like in your context?

QUESTIONS FOR PEOPLE FROM BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS

- What does a world without racism look like for you?
- What changes do we need to see?

Bible study 2 – Jesus and communal sin

Since **George Floyd's** murder on 25 May 2020, accounts of global racial injustice have continued to fill our news feeds, contributing to a growing sense that we can't let this moment pass without seizing the opportunity for change.

Some of us might not have recognised how deeply rooted racism is in our society. Because of this, we face the temptation to distance ourselves from the issues related to racial injustice because they provoke an emotional response or sense of guilt. We may also reference relationships that we have with those of different races as proof that racism does not relate to us. Yet racism is about so much more than interpersonal relationships.

UNDERSTANDING THE ROOTS OF RACISM

'Race' is a social construct. It is a means of categorising people based predominantly on perceived common physical and behavioural traits. For the most part, people aren't able to choose their racial identities or the assumptions and stereotypes associated with them – rather, race is something that society ascribes to people.

Race is deeply entwined with colonialism, modernity and the slave trade, created alongside the concept of 'whiteness' to justify colonisers' power over and brutal treatment of others. 'Whiteness' was the standard against which various types of 'otherness' were constructed, and race is therefore deeply embedded in narratives of superiority and inferiority. These narratives and the power relations they uphold have been reinforced over centuries, not only through public perception and the ways in which groups of people are portrayed through media and the arts, but also through public policy and our **education system**. The result of all this is persistent and structural racial inequality.

The problem we face today is that our societal structures, systems and institutions maintain racial inequality, continuing to privilege 'whiteness' and making it more difficult for people of other races to participate and flourish in our societies.

JESUS AND COMMUNAL SIN

Given this history, individualistic understandings of sin that emphasise interpersonal racism are inadequate because they do not take into account the ways in which our societal structures and systems perpetuate racial injustice. Neither do they take into account the often-unconscious bias with which we view and perceive others. In other words, individualistic understandings of sin do not take into account our complicity in systemic racism, unintentional though it may be. Although we might not hold explicitly racist views ourselves, some of us still benefit from a societal system that privileges some over others. Since we live within a society that is racially unjust, it is not enough for us to be non-racist. Instead, we need to be actively **anti-racist**. To be neutral, passive, silent or inactive in the face of systemic racism is to allow racial injustice to persist and is therefore to be complicit in it.

Throughout the gospels, Jesus critiques the behaviour of various power-holding groups in society, addressing them communally. He rebukes the teachers of the law on account of their treatment of the marginalised (Luke 20:45-47), for example, and the Pharisees for their love of power (Luke 11:43). Jesus also admonishes these groups for their hypocrisy, as we read in Matthew 23:29-32:

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Go ahead, then, and complete what your ancestors started!

The Old Testament prophets were sent by God to groups of people to rebuke them for the sin in their societies and to call them to repentance. In this passage, Jesus issues a similar rebuke to the teachers of the law and the Pharisees for their communal sin. He highlights their hypocrisy and alludes to the fact that they will eventually kill him, as their ancestors had killed the prophets that came before him. These religious leaders chose to respond to Jesus' rebuke by opposing him and looking for ways to catch him out. Eventually, this led to his death.

We need to remember that these words were spoken in a specific context and addressed to a specific group of people. Nevertheless, they can still speak into our situation today. Jesus' words remind us that communal sin is a reality, and that we are entangled in the sin of our societies. His words also speak of our generational interconnectedness – this might be countercultural to us, but as the inclusion of Jesus' genealogy in the gospels shows, the past matters and is part of our identity. We have inherited a culture, history and way of doing things. While there is much to celebrate here, we have also inherited a society that has practiced and benefited from racism. We have the opportunity now to stop this from being passed on to future generations. Once we are aware of injustice, we are responsible for dealing with it.

But along with Jesus' rebuke in this passage, it is clear that he is longing to exercise love, compassion and grace towards those that are willing. He also speaks these words:

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.

MATTHEW 23:37

Turning to our situation today and the racial inequality in our societies, what might Jesus and the prophets say to us? How will we choose to respond?

BIBLE PASSAGE

Read **Matthew 23:29-39** and **Luke 11:37-54**.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. RACIAL INJUSTICE

- How do you feel when you hear stories of racial injustice?
- Does racial injustice feel far removed from your own life and work or deeply connected with it?
- What societal narratives about race can you identify in your context?
- Where do these narratives intersect with your own life and work?
- What would it look like to be anti-racist in your context?

2. COMMUNAL SIN

- Keeping your own context in mind, how would Jesus fare within today's societal system?
- What do you think Jesus and the prophets' words would be today?
- In what ways could your generation be said to continue in the sins of previous generations?
- What responsibility do we have as people of faith to act in this context?

3. RESPONSE

- What holds you back from speaking out on issues of racial injustice?
- What might help you to overcome these barriers?
- How can you demonstrate a break with the actions of previous generations?
- What kind of society would you like to pass on to future generations?

A PRAYER FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

This prayer has been adapted from the prayer for racial justice prayed at the 2020 Tearfund Staff Conference. You can pray this individually, with your family or at your church.

God of justice. Open the eyes of those who wield power to the destructiveness of racism. Let justice roll like a river and move us to repentance and transformation. Convict the hearts of leaders in government, businesses, charities and the church, towards your kingdom values. May righteousness flow like a mighty stream.

God of justice, hear our prayer.

Christ who lived under occupation. Help us identify and change the systems and power structures in our countries that perpetuate racial inequality. Teach us to transform into societies that uphold the dignity of each person, made in your image. Where we need to be stirred, wake us up to take our part in praying, speaking up and taking action.

Christ who lived under occupation, hear our prayer.

Spirit of God, our breath in this world. Let this moment in history bring about everlasting change to violence and discrimination based on the colour of someone's skin. Breathe newness into our lands, our systems, our structures, our ways of living with one another.

Spirit of God, our breath in this world, hear our prayer.

God of restored relationships, to whom we all belong. Bring healing to all those that are suffering and have endured the pain caused by racial injustice. Restore broken relationships, bring peace; your peace and wholeness to all people in all places.

God of restored relationships, to whom we all belong, hear our prayer.

RESOURCE LIST

This list provides details of resources including books, articles and other media that can help inform you about racism, racial injustice, how to become anti-racist and becoming an ally. Many of the resources listed have come from the US where the #Black Lives Matter movement originated and, as such, are US-focused. We encourage you to think through how these resources might relate to a UK context.

Please note that most of the resources are not our own and we do not necessarily endorse all the personal or theological views expressed.

ARTICLES, STORIES AND BLOGS

[Racial justice: renewing our minds](#) (Tearfund)

[Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race](#)
(extract from her book, Renni Eddo Lodge, *The Guardian*)

[George Floyd protests: What do 'thug', 'white privilege' and 'ally' mean?](#) (BBC News)

[Black history timeline](#) (includes a good overview of Black British history, *The Guardian*)

[From the editor: Why we're saying Black lives matter](#) (Premier)

[The emotional impact of watching white people wake up to racism in real-time](#) (Metro News)

[Can we breathe? The politics of breath in COVID-19 and the carceral state](#) (Tonya Lovelace, Medium)

[White privilege: unpacking the invisible knapsack](#)
(Peggy McIntosh)

[Anti-racism for beginners](#) (Resource list; Black Lives Matter)

[The 1619 Project](#) (New York Times)

[5 things white people can do right now to combat white supremacist violence](#) (Medium)

[Making the transition from ally to co-conspirator](#)
(MJ Knitell, Medium)

[This is what Black burnout feels like](#)
(Tiana Clark, BuzzFeed)

[We're sick of racism, literally](#) (Douglas Jacobs, *New York Times*)

[How white people can hold each other accountable to stop institutional racism](#) (Elly Belle, *Teen Vogue*)

[100 things white people can do for racial justice](#)
(Corinne Shutack, Medium)

[Black Lives Matter and COVID-19: an activist roundtable](#) (Rampant)

[Black Lives Matter](#) (Chris Gaisie, We Are Tearfund)

[I'm Black. I'm a peacebuilder. I want your help.](#) (Jessica Murrey, Medium)

[5 things allies can do to sponsor co-workers from underrepresented groups](#) (Karen Catlin, Medium)

Black people were familiar with the discomfort of social distancing well before the pandemic (Simon Woolley, Huff Post)

Are you M.A.D. with the world?! (Rev Dr Kate Coleman, Next Leadership)

Why are Blacks dying at higher rates from COVID-19? (Rashawn Ray, Brookings Institute)

Toward a racially just workplace (Harvard Business Review)

Religion and racial justice: the George Floyd protests (Various blogs from the Berkeley center for religion, peace and world affairs)

A parent's guide to Black Lives Matter (Lily Pryer and Francesca Chong, Yoopies)

Black Lives Matter virtual library and more... (A Google classroom resource)

Free anti-racism guide (Nova Reid)

6 ways to be antiracist, because being 'not racist' isn't enough (Rebecca Ruiz, Mashable)

In India, merely saying 'Black Lives Matter' is not enough (Al Jazeera)

BIBLE STUDIES

Seeking peace (Rev. René August, Reconciliation Trainer at The Warehouse in South Africa)

CONVERSATIONS WITH CHURCH LEADERS

Nicky Gumbel interviews Isaac Borquaye (Tearfund Ambassador Guvna B) – HTB at Home

A conversation on race – Tim and Rachel Hughes, Gas Street Church

The truth in Black and white – Mike White's Wednesday Night Live

Statement from Pastor Agu Irukwu, senior pastor at Jesus House London

Jesus, race and culture – Carl Lentz and Bishop T.D. Jakes

Become the bridge: a conversation with Pastor Steven Furtick and Pastor John Gray – Elevation Church

The church and race featuring leading voices of the church – T.D. Jakes Presents

FILMS/SERIES/DOCUMENTARIES

Most of these resources can be watched via streaming sites such as BBC iPlayer, Netflix and Amazon

Black and British: A forgotten history (BBC)

Anthony (BBC)

Windrush (BBC)

Sitting in limbo (BBC)

Noughts and crosses (Mammoth Screen, based on the book series)

13th (Kandoo Films)

When they see us (Harpo Films)

American son (Simpson Street)

The hate U give (20th Century Fox, based on the book)

Just mercy (Warner Bros. Pictures, based on the book)

Black-ish (ABC Studios)

The green book (Universal Pictures)

Explained: the racial wealth gap (Vox Media)

Fruitvale station (Significant Productions)

Time: the Kalief Browder story (Roc Nation)

Pose (FX Productions)

HOW TO GUIDES

How to be a good ally (Kerena Sheath/Tearfund, 2020)

PODCASTS

Why the church needs to talk about race (Church Times interview with Ben Lindsay)

Breaking structures of injustice with Thandi Gamedze (Together Podcast, We Are Tearfund)

About race with Renni Eddo Lodge (series)

Conversations on faith and equality (Becs Dhillon and Nicky Gumbel)

Leading culture with Eugene Cho (Together Podcast, We Are Tearfund)

Race, class, reconciliation and the kingdom of God: a conversation with David Bailey (Church of the City, New York)

Decolonising church with Robert Beckford (Together Podcast, We are Tearfund)

The controversial Jesus: Jesus and privilege (Church of the City, New York)

The death of George Floyd: will anything change? (Today in Focus)

Why coronavirus is hitting Black communities hardest (Code Switch, NPR)

Have you heard George's podcast? (BBC)

Say your mind (Kelechi Okafor)

Bound for justice (Simplecast)

SHORT/MEDIUM-LENGTH VIDEOS

How to read the Bible through a lens of justice (We Are Tearfund)

How white fragility reinforces racism (Robin DiAngelo in *The Guardian*)

A response to the George Floyd situation (Jubilee Church, London)

Black parents explain how to deal with the police (Cut)

Systemic racism explained (Act.TV)

Let's get to the root of racial injustice (TED Talk, Megan Ming Francis)

Colour blind or colour brave? (TED Talk, Mellody Hobson)

How studying privilege systems can strengthen compassion (TED Talk, Peggy McIntosh)

Acknowledging racism and where to start

(Light Watkins)

Trevor breaks down reparations & white privilege

(The Daily Show with Trevor Noah)

Holy post: race in America

(VeggieTales creator Phil Vischer)

BOOKS

We recommend that, where possible, you buy second-hand copies of books, share with friends or use e-readers. You can also support some of the UK's brilliant Black-owned bookshops by shopping at: New Beacon Books (in London), Book Love or No Ordinary Bookshop. You can also buy from Black-owned and Black-led presses like Jacaranda Books.

1. ***We need to talk about race: understanding the Black experience in a white majority church***
(Ben Lindsay, 2019)

2. ***Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race***
(Renni Eddo Lodge, 2017)

3. ***Brit (ish): on race, identity and belonging***
(Afua Hirsch, 2018)

4. ***Natives: race and class in the ruins of empire***
(Akala, 2018)

5. ***Black and British*** (David Olusoga, 2016)

6. ***There ain't no Black in the Union Jack***
(Paul Gilroy, 1987)

7. ***Born a crime*** (Trevor Noah, 2016)

8. ***Just mercy*** (Bryan Stevenson, 2014)

9. ***The good immigrant*** (Nikesh Shukla, 2016)

10. ***Me and white supremacy*** (Layla F Saad, 2020)

11. ***How to be an anti-racist*** (Ibram X Kendi, 2019)

12. ***The hate U give*** (Angie Thomas, 2017)

13. ***I know why the caged bird sings***
(Maya Angelou, 1969)

14. ***I'm still here: Black dignity in a world made for whiteness*** (Austin Channing Brown, 2018)

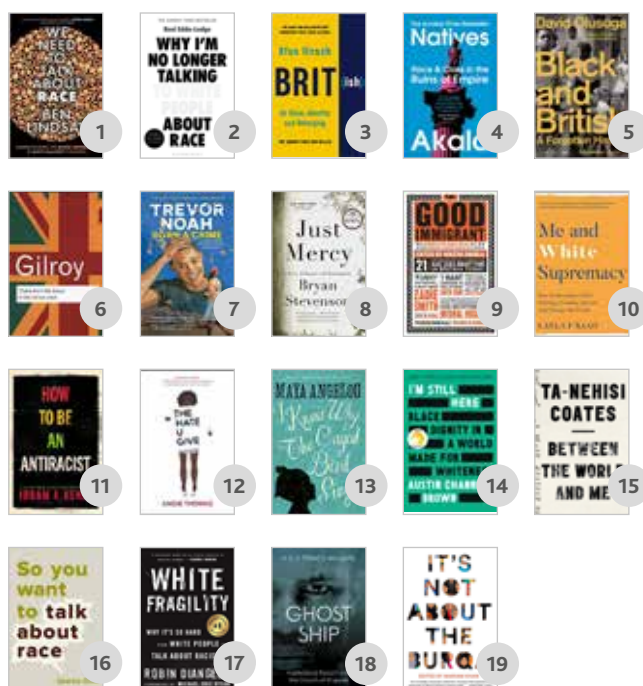
15. ***Between the world and me*** (Ta-Nehisi Coates, 2015)

16. ***So you want to talk about race*** (Ljeoma Oluo, 2018)

17. ***White fragility*** (Robin DiAngelo, 2018)

18. ***Ghost ship: institutional racism and the Church of England*** (A. D. France-Williams, 2020)

19. ***It's not about the burqa***
(edited by Mariam Khan, 2019)



STAFF REFLECTIONS

At the 2020 Staff Conference, we asked Tearfund staff from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds to share how they have been feeling during the events surrounding the death of George Floyd in Minnesota, USA in May 2020 and the continued overt and systemic racial injustice Black people experience. Their reflections, shared below, reinforce why Tearfund, as an organisation, needs to address these issues which are affecting our staff, our partners and those we serve, as well as our world.

'For the last few days now, I feel that the change we are praying and protesting for – will finally come. I feel hopeful that my family will get equal opportunities in the future and will be treated just like everybody else.'

'I feel anger and rage at the church for dragging its feet and being amongst the last to awaken to this moment, even though it remains a part of the structural injustice.'

'I have been emotionally distraught to see such a blatant injustice and disregard for a man's life because of the colour of his skin in the case of George Floyd and many others now being revealed.'

'A deep engulfing sadness over the perceived threat and the lack of value that this world has for my heritage and skin colour. There is even deeper pain for having to learn (from a very early age) how to navigate this world cautiously because I am Black.'

'It's been really difficult to comprehend with all that has been happening, COVID-19 has been devastating. George Floyd's death is like the straw that broke the camel's back. It has left me feeling helpless, filled with trepidation, apprehension and having a feeling of melancholy. I have stoically soldiered on by his grace and mercies.'

'I am coping with the pressure of the knee on my neck. I have been feeling the knee on my neck all my life. There is a knee on the neck of my country's economy because someone else determines how much they pay for our exports and imports. The knee is on the neck of my kids due to the limitations I put on them in how they dress, how they should behave and how much harder they should work compared to their counterparts if they are to compete in the world where they will live. I have been feeling like the knee is choking me but I have had to develop positive coping mechanisms. George Floyd only triggered the traumas. But in Christ, we cope.'

'I have been feeling exhausted. It is seriously tiring being Black and I am feeling the weight of that fatigue more and more these days. Yet, I remain hopeful, both in our Lord and in our people.'

'I am exhausted. I haven't slept properly for days. I am sad. My heart is broken. I am re-living the experiences of racism from my past – they are painful. I cry often, sometimes because of deep hurt, sometimes because of anger. I'm tired.'

'When I see pictures of George Floyd, it's so painful that he could be my husband or my brother or my nephew. It needs to be better for my children.'

'Words fail to capture where I am. I just can't understand. Is this the price we have to pay for a response – a Black body murdered on the street, in broad daylight and broadcasted for the world to see... again? Is this the price for people to start talking about the reality of racism in our lives? Is this the price for people to open a book? Is this the price for people to say something? My white friends keep telling me they don't understand. Of course they don't understand. But that doesn't excuse their silence. Are we not humans? My anger is not isolated to being a person of colour. My anger is bound up in my humanity. The most painful part is watching the awkward silence, when we are supposed to embody a Jesus that spoke loudly against those who oppressed and marginalised others...'

'I am enraged by how the church finds it so difficult to "love their neighbour". Their neighbour being their Black "brothers and sisters" in Christ. The blatant disregard and constant justifications to the systemic racism and discrimination the Black community especially face speaks volumes.'

'It's been difficult for myself to process how I feel so it makes it almost impossible to describe. A world where people die every day because of the colour of their skin is a world some of us have been living in for a long time and it hurts that it took this traumatic event for people to notice. I'm genuinely concerned that the global cry of the oppressed, of a group of people in deep, deep pain, won't be enough for people to change. We say we follow Jesus where the need is greatest but there is a great need on your front door. What will it take for you to see us?'

'I've felt saddened that the racist past of large segments of the church still runs deep and you can see it all over social media. I feel drained by the fact that my Black skin is still an offense in 2020. But, overall, I feel loved by the creator of the universe who invented my melanin, my curls

and my coils. Who created me in his image. Who calls me beloved, and who hears the cries of the marginalised and cares. He is my ultimate hope and my strength. Jesus understands. Jesus sees.'

'George Floyd's death has left me feeling devastated and broken. My heart is shattered for my children who cannot understand why they would be seen as inferior when Jesus tells us different. My heart is broken for all the Black and minority people around the world who feel broken too, who live with racism and unconscious bias on an almost daily basis, from the day they are born till the day they die. The pain is almost unbearable so I put it away year after year. This year it feels like I have to deal with this pain, I'm just not sure how.'

'My journey hasn't been as intense. Growing up in Africa (I lived there as a privileged child until I came to the UK to boarding school aged 16, almost 40 years ago) my experiences were sheltered. Any injustice that I encountered was not by someone who had a different skin colour to me – at least not many. But I find myself raising two Black boys in Britain and I know that the discourse and experience is different for them. I have lived in fear of my teenage boys getting stopped by the police just because they look different in my relatively middle-class suburb of west London. And wanting to shield them against that by ensuring they spoke well (yes!) and they dress well (no hoodies please!) and that they excel academically. Yet still I know the unconscious bias remains and unless society changes now – they too will face what their father has faced. My older son said this to us: 'Your generation of white people has to die out for racism to stop, because my generation of white people don't think and feel these things.' Is he right? Is this BLM going to be what is needed for his dream to be reality – that they will live in a truly racially just world? I pray so and because I want it to be so, I am willing to be uncomfortable and to talk about race with white people again.'

GLOSSARY

Although not an exhaustive list, this glossary provides definitions of key terms from various sources associated with the **#BlackLivesMatter** movement and discussions around race and racial injustice.

Ally¹

Anyone has the potential to be an ally. Allies recognise that though they are not a member of the oppressed group(s), they support and make a conscious, active effort to better understand the struggle, every single day and to take the struggle on as their own. Because an ally might have more privilege (and recognises said privilege), they are powerful voices alongside oppressed ones.

Anti-racist²

A person who actively opposes racism and promotes racial tolerance.

#BlackLivesMatter/Black Lives Matter

#BlackLivesMatter is an informal movement founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of **Trayvon Martin's** murderer. Black Lives Matter is the international human rights organisation that grew out of this movement from within the African American community. The organisation campaigns against violence and systemic racism towards Black people. The overall Black Lives Matter movement is a decentralised network and has no formal hierarchy. It strives for a world where Black lives are no longer systematically targeted for demise. The call for Black lives to matter is a rallying cry for all Black lives striving for liberation.

Colourblindness³

Colourblindness is based on racial-equity ideology, that suggests the best way to end discrimination is by treating individuals as equally as possible, without regard to race, culture, or ethnicity. However, in so doing, a person's skin, colour, race etc is actively unacknowledged. Colourblindness creates a society that denies people's negative racial experiences, rejects their cultural heritage, and invalidates their unique perspectives. The need for colourblindness implies there is something shameful about who a person is and the culture they were born into that shouldn't be talked about.

Equality⁴

The state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities.

¹ www.guidetoallyship.com

² Google dictionary

³ www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/culturally-speaking/201112/colorblind-ideology-is-form-racism

⁴ Google dictionary

Equity⁵

As an outcome, racial equity will be achieved when race no longer determines one's socioeconomic outcomes; when everyone has what they need to thrive, no matter who they are.

Inequality

The unequal access to opportunities that different people, races and groups experience.

Institutional racism⁶

The policies and practices within and across institutions that, intentionally or not, produce outcomes that chronically favour, or put a particular racial group at a disadvantage. Poignant examples of institutional racism can be found in school disciplinary policies in which students of colour are punished at much higher rates than their white counterparts, in the criminal justice system, and within many employment sectors in which day-to-day operations, as well as hiring and firing practices, can significantly disadvantage workers of colour.

Internalised/individual racism⁷

Our private beliefs and biases about race and racism influenced by our culture. These may include internalised feelings of oppression by people of colour or internalised feelings of privilege by white people.

Interpersonal racism⁸

Racist acts and microaggressions carried out from one person to another.

Intersectionality

The interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, disability, and gender that create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. For example, a middle-class, white, male will experience more privilege than that of a working class, Black, woman – purely based on the value given to each social category within a given society.

Non-Black Person of Colour (NBPOC)

A person who is neither white nor Black but from another ethnic group.

⁵ www.centerforsocialinclusion.org/our-work/what-is-racial-equity

⁶ www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/Definitions

⁷ www.cacgrants.org/assets/ce/Documents/2019/FourLevelsOfRacism.pdf

⁸ www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/Definitions

Person of Colour (POC)

A person who is not white.

Racial justice⁹

A proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.

It is both an individual and governmental, structural responsibility.

Systemic oppression (similar to structural racism/oppression)¹⁰

The intentional disadvantaging and mistreatment of groups of people based on their identity while advantaging members of the dominant group (gender, race, class etc) – whether overt or covert. Systemic oppression is systematic and historical and is supported and enforced by society and its institutions.

Structural racism¹¹

A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with 'whiteness' and disadvantages associated with 'colour' to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead it is a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist.

White privilege¹²

Inherent advantages possessed by a white person on the basis of their race in a society characterised by racial inequality and injustice. There may be differing levels of privilege depending on different intersections of identity, eg across class or disability, but white privilege applies to all white people.

White supremacy¹³

The belief that white people constitute a superior race and therefore have the right to dominate society, typically to the exclusion or detriment of other racial and ethnic groups, in particular Black people.

⁹ www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/Definitions

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² Google dictionary

¹³ *ibid*

WELL-BEING

As Tearfund, we have been using Listening Circles as a way to hold conversations around racial injustice. There has been great benefit in holding these conversations and so we thought it would be helpful to share how these work to offer you the opportunity to do the same.

A Listening Circle is a structured, but informal way to encourage people to process their personal experiences, thoughts and feelings with each other. Facilitating a Listening Circle will provide a safe space for individuals to share their feelings related to racial injustice, the #BlackLivesMatter movement and the impact on them personally and professionally.

Taking time to listen to one another is a simple but effective way of providing support. It is one way to encourage processing personal emotional responses and promote healthy ways of relating to one another.

Our well-being can be negatively impacted in periods of overwhelming distress such as during periods of rapid change, uncertainty or when witnessing a series of traumatic events. Promoting positive ways to maintain one's well-being (including physical, psychological, spiritual, social etc) is paramount to enhancing our personal resilience.

Listening Circles provide a non-judgemental space to share and to offer acceptance through listening. This can be used in any setting including in small groups, families or at church or community level.

Listening Circles are not intended to be a counselling session or a place for giving advice, but rather a space where mutuality and trust can be developed among the group through meeting, listening and sharing.

This can be integrated as part of a regular rhythm already established within a group you are a part of. It can also be introduced as a new regular and consistent way of providing a listening, sharing space to promote well-being.

SETTING UP LISTENING CIRCLES

- Create a dedicated time to have meaningful

connections and to provide a listening space to each other, fostering empathy and care.

- The space can be online (or face-to-face when that's possible).
- It can be facilitated or hosted by anyone with facilitation skills. A designated person can be selected for each session or the role of the facilitator or host can rotate from person to person for each session.
- This is not a form of group therapy. It is intended to be a safe environment for people to come and share, be listened to and listen to others.
- Everyone should be encouraged to participate, but give permission for people to 'opt out' and 'leave the circle' if they don't want to partake.

SETTING GROUND RULES

The person facilitating a Listening Circle can encourage the following behaviour from the group to help participants feel safe in the listening space:

- Encourage openness and honesty.
- Encourage everyone to participate and contribute.
- Ask participants to share only what they are willing for others to know about them while encouraging openness and trust.
- Maintain respect for one another when speaking or listening.
- Make it clear this isn't a space to be defensive or to point fingers but to connect with the person speaking by hearing their story and trying to enter into their 'frame of reference'.
- Encourage participants to speak from their own experiences (speak from the 'I') and not to generalise.

- To make the space safe, ask everyone to be accountable for maintaining confidentiality within the group. That means holding delicately what has been shared and not revealing identities or specific information outside of the group.
- Encourage people to notice their own personal emotional responses to what they hear people share.
- Give a rough guide on how long each participant should speak for so that there is enough time for everyone to share; this helps limit one person speaking more frequently than others or speaking for a long time. Remind people to listen well so that people feel their views are really heard.
- If there were any specific points that participants would like taken 'out of the circle' to feedback to your organisation or leaders, at the end of the session you may invite participants to explicitly request for their feedback to be made known. Otherwise, all information and discussions will be kept 'in the circle' to help participants to feel safe to share freely.
- Inform participants on how to access further support should this be needed at the end of the session.

QUALITIES FOR PARTICIPANTS TO EMBODY:

be warm and welcoming

be real, authentic and open to listen

develop your own sense of self-awareness and self-acceptance

show and grow in empathy and understanding (I'm with you) not sympathy (poor you)

be non- judgemental

show a willingness to be vulnerable

value each person as unique

listen and seek to understand

be open and honest

understand the need for balance between caring for others and caring for self.

REFERRALS AND SIGNPOSTING

Following a session, it may be necessary to refer or signpost someone to seek further support and it is important to know where to go for this. Collate a list of local services offering professional support that participants of a Listening Circle can contact or be signposted to.

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**WE STAND WITH PEOPLE
WHO EXPERIENCE RACISM,
AND SPEAK OUT AGAINST
THIS INJUSTICE. TOGETHER,
WE HAVE THE POWER TO
CREATE CHANGE.**

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