



# **ONE: A conversation about racism, ethnicity and justice**

## **A Leaders Guide**

**Church of England Evangelical Council**

[www.ceec.info](http://www.ceec.info)

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## SECTION 1

### WELCOME!

My name is Jason and I am Black British. My parents were born in Barbados and I was privileged to spend a lot of time experiencing life and culture there as a teenager. But I have spent most of my life growing up in south-east England.

You're probably reading this leaflet because you are aware of racism in some shape or form in our society. My guess is that you are concerned about it – and wish as a Christian to learn how you (and your church) can both think and behave more biblically around issues of ethnicity.

So thank you for picking up this leaflet – I do hope that by watching the various videos on the CEEC website and engaging in the discussion that 'ONE' (our panel discussion) generates, your biblical understanding of the significance of ethnicity might be deepened. But I hope also that it would not stop there. My prayer is that you will be challenged, your life enriched and your hopes for the church expanded by a biblical vision of 'every tribe and every tongue and every nation' being brought together in eternity to honour the Lord Jesus.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line underneath the name.

Jason Roach

## SECTION 2

### A NOTE FOR CHURCH LEADERS/FACILITATORS OF DISCUSSION

This is a resource for church leaders who want to lead their congregations in thinking through important issues of race and racism. It calls us to tackle injustices and ethnic disparities in our church fellowships as well as in wider society. Most important of all, it challenges us to face up to these issues – from a biblical perspective - in our own hearts and lives.

Each church is unique – both in terms of its members and its context. You will therefore need to work out how best to use the ‘ONE’ resources from CEEC.

For some churches, it might be helpful to ‘trial’ the panel discussion at PCC or in some other leadership context, before using it more widely in the church. In other situations, it may be more helpful to distribute it via small group/Bible group/house groups.

In some churches, it will be important to hold several meetings to discuss the issues of ethnicity and racism. In other situations, one evening (or Saturday morning) might be more appropriate.

In this leaflet you will find:

- A suggested outline for how to offer a 3 (or 4) session exploration of ONE.
- A suggested outline for a single session exploration of ONE.
- A set of questions from which you can select as you feel appropriate for your group (whether you choose to host one or more sessions).
- A list of some of the biblical references and passages that might undergird and steer your discussion.

## SECTION 3

### A 3 OR 4 SESSION EXPLORATION OF 'ONE'

#### Session 1 – Hearing each other's stories

It would be good to ensure that people of colour (those who are not white or of European parentage) in your church have the opportunity here to tell their stories – whether they have come to England in recent years or are British born and bred (in which case it may be helpful for them to tell something of the story of their parental and grand parental families – and in particular to highlight any experience of being immigrants and facing discrimination). Nobody should feel obliged or coerced into sharing their stories, but everybody should have the opportunity. Sensitive conversations will be required in the planning and organisation of these sessions. Listening is paramount.

The purpose in hearing these stories is for everyone to understand, hear and 'get' just how real and deep issues of discrimination and/or prejudice are – and that they are often more common than we realise even within the church.

#### ONE videos to watch:

- Jason's story
- Esther's story

#### Leader

- You could use one of these videos at the start of the meeting – and ask whether people identify in any way with Jason's experience (not necessarily with regard to the police – but in other ways).
- It is important to conduct these discussions in such a way that people are able to tell their stories without fear of dismissal or recrimination. It might be helpful to set some 'ground rules' for conversation – for example that comments have to be addressed through the person chairing the meeting – and that people are thanked for their contributions publicly in the group even if individuals in the group found their stories hard to listen to. You will know your own people better than the authors of this leaflet – but we wish to draw your attention to just how sensitive these issues are and how vulnerable people feel either in telling their own stories, or hearing stories from others that are challenging.

#### Session 2 – Bible study

It might be interesting at the start of this session to ask individuals in the group which Bible passages they would go to in order to be informed about issues of ethnicity. If the group is able to make a list (for example on a flipchart) that will be helpful. If they struggle to identify bible verses/passages that will demonstrate all the more the need for this session.

Then show the ONE panel discussion film – and give people a piece of paper and pencil so that as they watch the film they can make notes:

- if they hear a Bible passage referred to that it might be helpful for the group to study,
- if listening to the panel raises any questions they would like to discuss further.

At the end of the film – invite people to have a quick comfort break – after which it might be helpful to list all the Bible verses people noted and/or the questions they logged. Working through both of these could be an agenda for the rest of the meeting – and possibly one further meeting (hence the suggestion of session 3 as follows).

#### Session 3 – if needed

If the Bible verses and questions logged in session 2 as people watched the panel discussion were not addressed/explored in session 2, then this additional session 3 is designed to provide that capacity.

#### Session 4 – next steps

Leader – it is important that you are sure that the group has wrestled with the biblical texts before engaging in this session. Otherwise, there is every possibility that responses to the questions will be informed by a lack of biblical understanding, rather than a biblical perspective.

Assuming that you perceive the group to be ready to ask about 'next steps', here are a number of questions from which you can pick and choose as you feel appropriate.

- Are there times when you have witnessed racism and remained silent? Why?
- What difference could it make if we spoke up in those moments?
- What biblical verses would 'nudge you' to speak up positively in these moments?
- To what extent does our church currently reflect the demographics of our local community?
- How can we encourage leaders who are people of colour to be role models for others? What can be the obstacles to this?
- Could our church be involved in supporting or facilitating the raising up of more leaders from diverse backgrounds?
- Think about your close friends. Do you have any close friends from an ethnic or racial background different to you? How could you begin or strengthen relationships with people different to yourself?
- Which books have you read in the last six months which have been written by people of colour?  
Leader – this is a point where you could recommend two books:
  - *We Need to Talk About Race* by Ben Lindsay.
  - *Reading While Black* by Esau McCaulley.
- What other concrete steps could you take as a result of what you have heard and/or discussed in this session?

## SECTION 4

### A SINGLE SESSION DISCUSSION OF 'ONE'

If it is possible to have this one session as a whole morning (e.g. Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon) you could break it up as follows:

1. Welcome and introduction to the topic.
2. Videos - watch Jason and Esther's stories.
3. Discussion – to see if anyone identifies with the stories of Jason/Esther.
4. Introduction to ONE panel discussion video.
5. ONE panel discussion video – watch together.
6. Comfort break – five minutes.
7. Questions – please use a selection of questions from those below as you feel most helpful (you will need to prepare in advance what you feel might be helpful questions for your contexts/people).
8. Which of the bible verses (section 6) need to 'steer' and 'shape' you and your church at this time ?
9. What next – what can we agree we need to do and to pray for?

## SECTION 5

### 'ONE' DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Please note – the indicated (5-10 mins) refer to the appropriate part of the panel discussion film.

#### Questions to reflect on before watching 'ONE'

- Growing up, what was your neighbourhood like? What were your schools like? What kinds of kids do you remember interacting with?
- Reflecting on your childhood, can you remember a moment when you became aware of differences based on ethnicity? What struck you in that situation? How did you feel?
- How much do you talk about issues around race and ethnicity in your church?

#### Institutional racism (5-10 mins)

- Do you tend to think about racism as an individual problem or a structural problem? Why do you tend to think that way?
- Are there any insights from the Anti-Racism literature that you have read that are helpful to you? What do you see as its limitations?
- Can you see ways in which you need to repent for your part in the racism in the culture that you inhabit?

#### Individual responsibility (11-16 mins)

- How does the bible's perspective challenge you in your thinking (e.g. Acts 6 and James 2)?
- Is racism just a 'majority White' problem?
- What role do you feel you have in addressing racism?

#### Thinking and listening (16-20 mins)

- Do you think you need to read more Amos (the biblical imperative to seek justice) or more 1 Peter (the biblical imperative to forgive)?
- How could you take opportunities to listen and lament with those who have stories of suffering?
- How could these activities change relationships in your church / community?

#### Knowing your history and theology (20-25 mins)

- Do you remember learning about the British Empire in school?
- What do you remember learning about the experience of immigrants to Britain?
- Does the theology of race discussed in the video sound familiar? Why / why not?

#### Calling out injustice and raising up role models (25 – 30)

- Are there times when you have witnessed racism and remained silent? Why?
- What difference could it make if we spoke up in those moments?
- How can we encourage leaders who are people of colour to be role models for others? What can be the obstacles to this?
- Could our church be involved in supporting or facilitating the raising up of more leaders from diverse backgrounds? What steps would need to be taken to make this possible?

#### Multi-ethnic Churches (30-33)

- To what extent does your church currently reflect the demographics of your local community?
- What excites you about the biblical vision for multi-ethnic church? What do you see as some of the barriers to that vision becoming a reality in your church?

#### Books for further reading

- We Need to Talk About Race by Ben Lindsay.
- Reading While Black by Esau McCaulley.

#### Next steps

- Think about your close friends. Do you have any close friends from an ethnic or racial background different to you? How could you begin or strengthen relationships with people different to yourself?
- Make a list of the books you have read over the last 3-6 months. How many of these books are written by people of colour? What two books could you read next to broaden the voices you are listening to?
- What other concrete steps will you take as a result of what you have heard and / or discussed?



## BIBLE REFERENCES FROM THE PANEL DISCUSSION (NIV)

Leaders might wish to use these passages to launch, inform and/or guide discussion.

**Galatians 3:28**

<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

**Genesis 1:27**

<sup>27</sup> So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

**Acts 17:26, 27**

<sup>26</sup> From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. <sup>27</sup> God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.

**Revelation 7:9**

<sup>9</sup> After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

**Esther 9:13-15**

<sup>13</sup> "If it pleases the king," Esther answered, "give the Jews in Susa permission to carry out this day's edict tomorrow also, and let Haman's ten sons be impaled on poles."

<sup>14</sup> So the king commanded that this be done. An edict was issued in Susa, and they impaled the ten sons of Haman. <sup>15</sup> The Jews in Susa came together on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, and they put to death in Susa three hundred men, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

**Romans 3:10-12**

<sup>10</sup> As it is written:  
<sup>11</sup> "There is no one righteous, not even one;  
 there is no one who understands;  
 there is no one who seeks God."  
<sup>12</sup> All have turned away,  
 they have together become worthless;  
 there is no one who does good,  
 not even one."

**James 2:1**

<sup>2</sup> My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favouritism.

**Acts 6:1**

<sup>6</sup> In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews<sup>[a]</sup> among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

**Genesis 3**

The Fall

**Galatians 2**

<sup>14</sup> When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

<sup>15</sup> "We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles <sup>16</sup> know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

**Romans 12:15**

<sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

**Genesis 1, 3**

<sup>3</sup> And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

**Revelation 7:9**

<sup>9</sup> After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.