

**Ben Lindsay, *We need to talk about race***

**Background Info:** This was recommended to me by Michelle, a member of Platt.

**Bio:** Ben Lindsay is pastor at New Cross Emmanuel Church, London & founder of Power the Fight - a charity that seeks to train & empower communities to end youth violence.

**Key quotes/ideas:****The importance of history**

"We cannot talk about the present without discussing the past. As frustrating as it might be for a white person to hear about historic events that occurred long before they were born, for black people, it's an important part of the dialogue in moving forwards."

"The growth of the black church can be traced back to the prejudice that black people experienced arriving in the UK in the 1950s...churches discouraging them from attending or, in more extreme instances, refusing admission to their church buildings...the result was they formed their own churches."

**Talking about race isn't easy**

"Some of the barriers I have faced in talking to white people about race are defensiveness & dismissiveness. Many of the white people I talk to are not actively racist. They do, however, often struggle to acknowledge the privileges that come with their whiteness."

"For racial reconciliation to be achieved...black forgiveness of white racial wrongs cannot be the only answer. White confession & repentance needs to happen...for denying racism exists...for a lack of impetus to correct racial inequality in the Church..."

"People sometimes make the mistake of opening up a very deep, personal & exposing debate without making the effort to get to know the person first...This should be a provocation for white members of the Church to actively get to know black people. White people may ask, 'Why must I make all the effort?' The answer is easy: you're the majority culture & you are part of the power structure, whether you know it or not."

**Structural racism within the church**

"Many people of colour struggle to feel integrated in white majority churches. Whether it's the lack of representation in church senior leadership structures or the feeling of exclusion from day-to-day church life, isolation is a theme I hear painfully frequently."

"In 2017, [C of E] statistics showed that 3.5% of clergy are BAME &, among new ordinands, only 7% were from minority ethnic backgrounds. Clearly there are hurdles to the advancement of black leadership."

"Often within churches, leadership development opportunities are based on relationship not on transparent recruitment policy...leadership development for black people cannot be left to chance."

"Attracting black people to church isn't difficult...Creating inclusive communities, however, where black people feel that they are a valued part of the culture, not just observers, is more complicated."

**Other key ideas:** the whitening of Christianity; colour blindness vs colour consciousness; justice, action & community

**Statements to consider:**

"We can't become what we can't see...It is my belief that one of the reasons black Pentecostal churches are growing rapidly is because people see others like them at the front to church."

"A deliberate & robust strategy that gives the minority culture opportunity to lead can only happen when the majority culture is giving away permission to control & shape the culture."

"We need to repair broken leadership structures that 'try to add diversity without subtracting control'"

