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### **Baptist anger over Windrush crisis**

**‘Appalling and deplorable’. Baptists have spoken of their anger over the Windrush deportation crisis – and have urged the Government to resolve the situation as quickly as possible with calls for both an amnesty and compensation**

It has emerged in recent weeks that thousands of people who arrived in the UK after the Second World War from Caribbean countries are at risk of deportation because they don't have the required documentation to prove their residency status.

Some have already lost jobs and faced spells in detention centres. On Monday (16 April) Home Secretary Amber Rudd described their treatment as 'appalling', and announced the creation of a 20-strong task force to ensure that such long-term residents would no longer find themselves classified as being in the UK illegally. Prime Minister Theresa May apologised to Caribbean leaders on Tuesday (17 April).

While this new task force was welcomed, Baptists have criticised the time it has taken the Government to respond, and the fact the situation has developed in the first place.

Rupert Lazar, minister of East Barnet Baptist Church and a former Baptist Union President, said, 'I'm simply appalled. This is all wrong. I think of the hurt, the pain and fear. It's a tragedy.'

'Our Government needs to do everything in its power to sort this out, and sort it out quickly.'

'I'm glad apologies have been made, but the Government now needs to find more appropriate ways of working this through without putting people through more anxiety.'

Pat White, a magistrate and member of Brixton Baptist Church, added, 'I thought it was a joke when I first heard it, but it's absolutely appalling for those who don't have the documentation.'

'These seniors are people in their 60s, who came here as children. They were invited and were part of the restructuring of the country.'

Pat, who was born in Jamaica and came to England as a young girl in 1962, revealed that her mum applied for British citizenship after hearing Enoch Powell's "Rivers of Blood" speech in 1968.

If she had not done this, Pat would now be directly affected. 'I could have had a knock at the door. Who or what would I be going back to? I've lived here most of my life. My family is here. I couldn't have continued being a magistrate.'

'But this is what's been happening to people. It's deplorable.'

Rosemarie Davidson-Gotobed, National Minority Ethnic Vocations Officer, Archbishop's Council of the Church of England and formerly the first Racial Justice Co-ordinator for the London Baptist Association, said the situation was both 'appalling' but 'predictable'.

'I feel really saddened this has happened, but this was flagged up after the Brexit vote.'

'However, it was ignored and described as scare-mongering.'

'Of course the Government response is slow – they are dealing with Black people. It's only now things have ratcheted up the Home Office has something to say. This is something we often see with Black people in this country.'

Pat agreed the Government should have sorted this properly from the beginning. She welcomed the creation of the task force, and hopes there will be a complete amnesty for those affected. If no amnesty, she wants the task force to assist with finding evidence, such as using school and national insurance records. 'Let's hope the task force does its job properly.'

Rosemarie said she would like to see four things:

- A public statement of apology
- Individual letters of apology to every person affected
- Compensation for the distress and suffering.
- Letters of apology to each High Commissioner who has been ignored.

But even with this, there would still be 'nothing redeemable' about what's happened. She said the 70th anniversary of the Windrush's arrival on 22 June would now be 'tinged with sadness'.

'It's important to honour the Windrush generation who have served. But we must not take for granted that our contribution in this country is worth anything. These pioneers came here by invitation – and dragged this country out of a bomb hole. They have worked hard and paid their taxes. They were no more immigrants than someone moving from Edinburgh to London.

'Yet this shows it can be taken away in a heartbeat. It's a wake-up call to those living in a cloud of complacency.'

Pat encouraged churches to both speak out against the injustice, and rally around anyone directly affected in their communities.

She highlighted the importance of the Windrush generation on Baptist churches. She cited her own church – Brixton Baptist Church – which was a white majority congregation when she began attending in the 1960s. As people moved away and retired beyond London, its congregation has much more of a Caribbean heritage.

'A number of Baptist churches would have closed years ago had it not been for this generation,' said Pat.

She hopes the controversy and the 70th anniversary focus in June will result in renewed calls for a Windrush Day to be marked in the calendar: a public holiday to celebrate the contributions of black, Asian and other minority communities to Britain.

Wale Hudson Roberts, the Baptist Union's Justice Co-ordinator, offered this statement:

'Mass deportation is a policy associated with tyrannical states such as apartheid South Africa. To believe that thousands of people in Britain are of risk of that same fate beggars belief.

'Many from the Windrush generation have not only volunteered their skills to help build a crumbling British economy - stretched to its limit in the aftermath of the Second World War - but some have even made this country their home, contributing to its growth.

'The fact that the Home Office did not keep a record of all those granted leave to remain or issue paperwork confirming their status is a Home Office blunder and shows scant regard for a generation of Caribbeans committed to the betterment of a county that would not be what it is, or church be where it is, if it were not for their Herculean contributions.

'An 'apology' from the Prime Minister, which may have been precipitated because of her meeting with leaders from nine countries including the High Commissioner from

Barbados, should have been made some months ago, when deportations were forced on skilled and hard Caribbean communities.

'The sad reality is the month of April not only marks the 50th anniversary of the death of the Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King, but the 25th anniversary of the death of Stephen Lawrence (who is buried in Jamaica) and the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the Windrush generation. This most recent debacle some years after these significant milestones does beg the question: have race relations in the UK really moved on? Or are they always simmering beneath the surface? I think the latter.

'The Government's behaviour has been reprehensible, inflicting indignity on thousands of Caribbeans. It needs to do the right thing and that is more than just an apology, but compensation for damage caused.'

## **Who Let The Dads Out?**

**Many testify to the life-changing impact of a ministry to support fathers and their children at its 15th anniversary, writes Tony Sharp**

Turning the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers (Malachi 4:6) ... to make ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1:17).

An event to mark the 15th anniversary of the birth of the Who Let The Dads Out? took place at Hoole Baptist Church (HBC Chester) recently. The movement had begun in the exact same place on the 29 March 2003.

Dads, teenagers, plus wives and partners gathered alongside the current 'crop' of fathers, father figures and their children to celebrate, eat bacon butties and cake, and to reflect on the role Who Let The Dads Out? has played in their lives.

The Who Let The Dads Out? ministry exists to inspire and resource churches to support fathers, father figures and their children. It challenges churches to specifically and intentionally reach out to the dads in their communities so that they can form friendships, provide encouragement, and give men and their families the opportunity to explore the Christian faith.

Starting from that one group at HBC Chester in 2003, the movement has grown steadily over the intervening years as churches across all denominations have given it a go. Some have worked with dads and toddlers, others with dads and older children, some have catered specifically for dads who care for children with special needs. All are united by Christian love and a passion to support and share faith with whole families, whatever their shape, size and context.

Now in 2018 there are more than 250 churches registered on the Who Let The Dads Out? website, with around 20 per cent of those being Baptist.

Part of the Bible Reading fellowship (BRF) since 2012, the Who Let The Dads Out? ministry team of Mark Chester and Tony Sharp (who both still worship at HBC Chester) focus their efforts on building that sense of movement across all the registered groups so that ideas and encouragement can be shared regionally, nationally and even internationally. This is supplemented by theological and practical training on Ministry to Fathers that the team deliver through training days/weekends and a regular programme of speaking engagements.

As former Baptist Union President Chris Duffett has said, Who Let The Dads Out? is a 'catalyst outreach' that builds relationships with fathers and their children and offers support, both practical and spiritual.

Indeed several of the dads who attended the reunion reflected on both the practical and spiritual support that the group has provided. Dave, Hywel and Simon spoke of how the Who Let The Dads Out? group had been the place where they had established the man to man friendships that are still going strong over a decade later.

Martin stood with his son Alex and explained how the group had been the opportunity for Alex to find his way into HBC and inter-church youth groups where his own faith continues to form and grow. And another Dave pointed to his own faith journey as he attended Who Let The Dads Out?, a Daddy Cool! parenting programme, and a Soul Man? discussion group: he has moved from questioning whether God exists, to being a man convicted of both the reality of God and of his paternal love demonstrated through Jesus Christ.

Meanwhile Adam, one of the current attendees of the group, has testified to his recent conversion as he got baptised on the 8 April.

Who Let The Dads Out? at HBC Chester now meets twice a month (once at the church and once in a local pre-school), and typically draws together around 13 dads and 20+ children each time. Variations on this model are taking place all across the UK and beyond. Some are larger in number, others smaller, but all have stories to tell of how the hearts of fathers and children are warmed to one another through the backing of church leaders and a few simple actions by a dedicated team of volunteers who give time once or twice a month to intentionally and specifically reach out to the fathers in their community.

And don't forget the bacon butties!

## How far can your church reach?

### **Baptist minister Paul Hill reports from a recent visit to Uganda - and explains how a gift from a small Baptist church in Gillingham is far reaching**

Easter is always a special time, but Easter 2018 was more special than most for the Hill family and a close friend. Carwyn & Reninca (Co-founder & CEO of BMS partner organisation Hope Health Action [HHA] and HHA's East Africa Co-ordinator respectively) with their children, Joseph (7) and Abigail (16 months), accompanied by Carwyn's mum and dad, Glynis and Paul, along with Emma Cordell, spent two weeks around Easter in the South Sudanese refugee camps in North Uganda. It was a first time visit for Glynis and Emma, and a return visit for the others.

The trip was to further HHA's work among the refugees, including the Microlife Cradle VSA (Vital Signs Alert) Project in partnership with King's College London and supported by BMS World Mission, which has funded more than 600 units for use in this phase of the project. The £20 handheld device measures blood pressure and heart rate; each is simple to use with very little training and took a Professor at King's some 20 years to develop. (He was rightly honoured for this work in the last New Year's Honours List.)

Emma resigned her post as an A&E Nurse in a London hospital to train local volunteers and oversee the project over the next three months. (Well done, Emma - and Dave, her husband, who remains at home in London!)

The Cradle Project has already been trialled successfully by HHA in Haiti, where it saved four lives on the first day of the trial, and is now being deployed on a larger scale at two refugee camps in Uganda, including Bidi Bidi, the largest refugee camp in the world with about 300,000 refugees and covering some 270 square kilometres; that's 104.25 square miles, or about one sixth of the size of Greater London.

The Cradle monitor is like a blood pressure monitor, but also measures heart rate and shock index readings, which are translated into one simple 'traffic light' reading of red, amber, or green. Green means all is well, amber, that the patient needs referral to a qualified midwife or Doctor, and red, that the patient needs an immediate referral. King's will also be sending some of their staff to monitor the project at some key stages during the trials.

Glynis' role was vital in looking after Joseph and Abigail, to free the others for their own areas of work. Paul, officially retired from pastoral ministry, was well used in preaching (in churches and under trees), teaching and training Baptist ministers and church leaders, as well as contributing to the safeguarding training given to HHA's South Sudan and Uganda Board of Trustees.

He also spoke to staff and pupils at different schools and took an impromptu assembly in the Amazing Grace Baptist Nursery/Primary School, a school of 347 children just one mile from the Ugandan/South Sudanese border. For this he enlisted Glynis' help.

#### Uganda visit

This was undoubtedly the Lord's timing, as the visit itself was impromptu and unscheduled. Having spoken to the children in a tarpaulin marquee, Paul, with Glynis, taught the school, "Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah! Praise ye the Lord!" (easily learned by any language group!). Unusually, Paul 'wound up' the children as they sang in rounds and the noise was almost deafening. The headteacher asked Paul to speak to the staff on "Leadership" and then asked the question, "How do we help children who are traumatised?". Many of the children had been, and 15 of the new arrivals were orphaned, having seen their parents shot and killed as they crossed the border.

Through no fault of their own, neither the head nor the staff (all unpaid volunteers) knew of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Paul knew something of this from his former career in the Metropolitan Police, so advised as best he could and, with part of a gift from his last astorate, The Bridge Baptist Church, Gillingham (Kent), provided funds for some exercise books, paper and ordinary and coloured pencils to allow for drawing therapy, as well as general use, as the school had very few resources of any description and nowhere near enough to go around. (Well done, The Bridge!)

Uganda visit2Paul used the rest of the gift from The Bridge to pay for food for pastors and church leaders at a two day conference he was speaking at, and for two bicycles for pastors from remote churches within the vast Bidi Bidi camp.

Further Bridge blessings came for Paul in the tarpaulin churches he was preaching in on Good Friday and Easter Sunday, as the tarpaulins were paid for by a gift from The Bridge during his visit last year. Furthermore, there were 302 people (adults and children) at the Easter Sunday Service and following Paul's sermon, about 15 came forward for prayer, including nine adults for salvation. Praise the Lord!

The Bridge is a small church, but a good church. Its small size is dwarfed by its big heart and great desire for the Lord's work and mission; locally and world-wide. It is not wealthy or well resourced, but it is generous and prepared to give what it can and where and when it can.

You may well have never heard of it, but at least 20 churches in the refugee camps have. It doesn't matter how big your church is, or how wealthy: how far can it reach? How far does it? How far will it?

For more information on Hope Health Action and its work internationally, visit [www.hopehealthaction.org](http://www.hopehealthaction.org)

## **'Richer nations shirking climate responsibilities'**

### **The Commonwealth's richer nations are shirking their responsibilities in the global effort to tackle climate change, while the bloc's poorer members are picking up the slack, according to a new report from development charity Christian Aid**

Christian Aid climate report The study, Climate inequality in the Commonwealth, assesses the pledges to the Paris Agreement of each Commonwealth country and measures them against national capacity and historic emissions (since 1990) to calculate their fair proportion of the effort to address climate change. The results show that the UK, Canada and Australia are in the red while poorer countries like Bangladesh, Kenya and Zambia are in credit. Small island states vulnerable to sea level rise like Kiribati, Vanuatu and Tuvalu are also more than doing their fair share.

The report's findings were released to coincide with this year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), which started on Monday (16 April). The meeting was relocated to London from Vanuatu after the Pacific island's infrastructure was too badly damaged by Cyclone Pam in 2015.

The findings do not make good reading for the UK - but there is an opportunity to make a huge difference by investing in renewables around the Commonwealth, said report author Mohamed Adow.

'The UK claims to stand in solidarity with its Commonwealth allies, but when it comes to one of the gravest threats to member nations, it is shirking its responsibilities,' said Mr Adow, Christian Aid's International Climate Lead.

'The UK is proud of the shared values between the 'family of nations' but it is not pulling its weight and instead is leaving the heavy lifting to much poorer countries. For Britain, the host country, which claims to care for both the climate and the Commonwealth, it risks being embarrassing if it doesn't step up its game.'

On a per capita basis the UK burns more carbon dioxide than 18 Commonwealth countries combined. Mr Adow explained that the UK could turn this state of affairs into 'an opportunity to do its fair share while eradicating energy poverty in the Commonwealth'.

Due to its relative wealth and the fact its emissions since 1990 are so high, the UK cannot do its fair share of the global effort to roll back emissions solely within its own borders; it also needs to help displace emissions elsewhere. By investing in renewables in energy poor Commonwealth countries, Britain can tackle climate change and boost the fortunes of the world's most needy at the same time.



To meet its obligations the UK needs to mitigate 700 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> internationally by 2030, which equates to 1,730 terawatt hours of renewable electricity. This alone would almost eradicate energy poverty in the Commonwealth, which stands at a needed 2,050 terawatt hours.

Mr Adow said, 'Britain has a long history of industrial innovation and helping bring light and power to the remotest parts of the world would be an achievement worthy of a nation which claims to be a climate leader. Together, the UK and Canada, which founded the Powering Past Coal Alliance, could eradicate energy poverty across the Commonwealth.'

He added, 'As the UK readies itself for departing the EU there has been much talk about the importance of trade and other collaboration within the Commonwealth. What better way of boosting the fortunes of its future trading partners by tackling climate change and bringing power to those that need it?'

CHOGM comes at a 'perfect moment' to kickstart an important year for the climate, said the charity. In December the world meets in Poland as part of the Talanoa Dialogue, the review process where countries will begin to strengthen the initial pledges made under the Paris Agreement. Currently the accord will only keep global temperature rise to between 2.7 C and 3.5 C, much higher than the 1.5 C rise that the world has agreed to try and limit it to.