

## Black Majority Baptist Churches keen to engage with white working class

Written by Administrator

Tuesday, 12 October 2010 00:00 -

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Black majority churches are keen to reach the white working class with the gospel, according to a Baptist minister speaking at a Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) multicultural event this Saturday (16 October).

The Revd Tade Agbesanwa, minister of Custom House Baptist Church in London, who will be speaking at The Gathering, says that black majority churches in the BUGB are looking for solutions to reach white working class people, including partnering with white majority churches and increasing giving to the annual Home Mission appeal (funding that finances the work of the BUGB and provides 'Mission through Ministry' grants to assist some Baptist churches to pay their ministerial stipends and 'Mission Project' grants to fund a diverse range of local mission initiatives).

"It is a matter of realising who we are," says the Revd Agbesanwa. "We are Kingdom people whatever our race. If we are a black majority church in a white majority area, we cannot close our eyes to them."

However, the Revd Agbesanwa recognises the problems with engaging with the white working class. "We have had the issue of 'white flight' in some churches when black people have become the majority. Why is this so? It is an uncomfortable question the people of God should ask.

"Can we disciple someone from a different culture? When people come to church they come for community. Can black and white communities do life together? It is a challenge for us all, the sooner we talk about it the better."

He added, "If blacks and whites in the same church are struggling to stay together, what is the hope that the non-Christian white working class will be attracted to come and stay in a black majority church?"

The Gathering, a multicultural event that the Baptist Union of Great Britain has held for the last five years, will be looking this year at helping black and white Baptists reach marginalised communities including the white working class. Speakers at the event include Head of BUGB

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Mission Department Ian Bunce, BMS World Mission Regional Coordinator Chris Andre-Watson, church planter and founder of Urban Expression Stuart Murray Williams and Diane Blackler who comes from a white working class background in South East London.

The Revd Wale Hudson-Roberts, BUGB Racial Justice Advisor, one of the organisers of The Gathering, says it will be a joyous and challenging event. “The Gathering will not only be exuberant and varied in its worship but will help us understand and appreciate people from different cultures and classes and allow us to see how we can work closer together for the benefit of God’s Kingdom”.

The Gathering takes place at Woodgrange Baptist Church in Forest Gate, London from 10:30 to 16:30. For more information visit [http://www.baptist.org.uk/training\\_events/thegathering\\_10.html](http://www.baptist.org.uk/training_events/thegathering_10.html)