



Black Light? That sounds rather ominous – like ‘Black Power’ or ‘Black Lives Matter.’ Who is involved? What’s the course about? Is it political? Is it meant to make people feel guilty? Who is it for? What’s the agenda?

The Black Light course was developed 24 years ago by Les Isaac and Stuart Murray Williams, who became friends when Stuart was teaching at Spurgeon’s College and Les did some teaching there – so it’s not a knee-jerk response to current issues, but it does engage with contemporary concerns about racism and injustice. Nearly 120 people registered for the online course we ran twice in 2021, so we are running it again in May/June 2022.

The hosts and presenters are followers of Jesus, church leaders and leaders of mission agencies, black and white, from different backgrounds and with different areas of expertise. Some of them taught on the first course in 1997; others are younger and bring fresh perspectives.

What’s it about? It explores the presence and contributions of black people in the Bible, in church history and in Britain today. It celebrates the remarkable growth of the church in Africa and the exciting ‘reverse mission’ impact on Europe. It does not shy away from looking at the legacies of Christendom and colonialism, but it invites creativity and courage in seizing the opportunities that are emerging.

Is it political? No more than Jesus himself was political in the things he said and did, the way he challenged the status quo, his announcement of a new politics, which he called ‘the kingdom of God.’

Is it guilt-inducing? No, that’s not the aim, but it is challenging, inviting us to recover lost aspects of our histories, to reflect on our attitudes and relationships, and to ask what it means to follow Jesus in a multi-ethnic society.

Who is it for? Anyone interested in these topics, but especially for church leaders, youth leaders, mission leaders – actually, anyone interested in evangelism, justice, healthy churches and peaceful communities.

What’s the agenda? There is no hidden agenda, but one of our hopes is that the course will not only inform but inspire, challenge and equip, and result in new forms of partnership between black and white Christians and churches in seeking the kingdom of God in our nation. That’s the focus of the final session in the course.

The course is sponsored by the Ascension Trust (www.ascensiontrust.org.uk) and Urban Expression (www.urbanexpression.org.uk).

Programme

5 May: Black and White: the challenges we all face (Les Isaac and Stuart Murray Williams)

12 May: The Black Influence on Church History (Kate Coleman)

19 May: Post-colonialism and Post-Christendom (Ron Nathan and Stuart Murray Williams)

26 May: African Christianity in Western Europe (Israel Olofinjana)

9 June: The Black Presence in the Bible (Robert Beckford)

16 June: Roots and Routes (Bev Thomas)

23 June: White and Black: churches in the UK today (Alton Bell)

30 June: Partnership in Mission (Harvey Kwiyani and Dan Yarnell)

Interested? Register for a place at <https://www.blacklightcourse.uk/> or contact admin@urbanexpression.org.uk for more information.