

SST, Theology and race: 2017-18 update



2018 Plenary Panel on Prof Robert Beckford's *Documentary as Exorcism* (Bloomsbury, 2014). From left to right: Dr Dulcie McKenzie, Dr Carol Tomlin, Dr Chris Shannahan, Professor Robert Beckford, Dr William Ackah.

Summary of report on progress made to the SST AGM, April 2017. Actions are listed under the recommendations from the SST 'Theology and Race Report' (2016).

Recommendation 1: that the EC invite BAME theological leaders to accompany and advise it in addressing this issue and establishes practices or structures to this end.

We are putting together an Advisory Group to this end.

Recommendation 2: that the EC explore ways to introduce BAME colleagues into its membership and acts upon them expeditiously.

Two BAME colleagues, Dr Dulcie McKenzie and Dr Carlton Turner, both of The Queen's Foundation, Birmingham have been working with the Executive Committee's subgroup and were formally co-opted as members of the Committee at the 2018 AGM.

Recommendation 3: that the EC together with its partners consider the options above (and others) and, as soon as possible, develop a strategy and timescale for introducing changes to help shift the culture of the Society in a more inclusive direction.

For the 2018 annual conference we introduced a Theology and Popular culture stream, in order to diversity the range of approaches to theology pursued at the conference. We continue to seek to invite a diversity of plenary speakers. One reason for the decision to hold the 2019 conference at the University of Warwick is to make it more accessible to attendance from BAME scholars living in the area.

Recommendation 4: that the EC consider as a matter of priority ways of facilitating reflexivity on these and related issues (cf. class, gender) as part of the programme in future annual conferences.

In 2017 we held a plenary panel on class; in 2018 we had a plenary panel reflecting on Prof. Robert Beckford's book *Documentary as Exorcism*, chaired by Dr. Dulcie McKenzie.

Recommendation 5: that the EC begin outreach activities with BAME constituencies, beginning with those willing to accompany it (see Rec. 1) and produce a strategy and timescale for implementation as soon as possible.

Recommendation 6: that the EC pursue conversations with relevant stakeholders to consider and (as appropriate) realise these and similar options for further participation from BAME theology scholars and students.

Recommendation 7: that the EC give thought as to how to sustain the culture of change required to see through an agenda addressing the issues identified here.

Dr. Ben Fulford was co-opted as Assistant Secretary at the 2018 AGM to coordinate work on this agenda.