



“You can’t keep pulling bodies out of the river and not send somebody upstream to see what or who is throwing them in.”
Jim Wallis

The Movement for Justice and Reconciliation aims to increase our understanding of how modern society has been affected by the legacy of oppression left by colonial slavery and industrial exploitation

The Legacy of Oppression

Deprived inner-city areas of 21st century Britain are increasingly becoming a diverse melting-pot of unhappiness and despair. The riots of August 2011 brought to the surface an underlying spirit of turmoil and hopelessness felt by many in our inner-cities, uniting people of many different cultural backgrounds in an expression of outrage against the injustices of modern society.

Recent research has shown links down the generations to colonial slavery, when millions were displaced from their African homeland and forced to work in British colonies, and the mass exploitation of working people in Britain in the Industrial Revolution. The events of 200 years ago would seem to have little bearing on our modern culture, but the links should not be so quickly dismissed. MJR is committed to exploring the evidence.

“A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.”
Marcus Garvey

We believe this legacy of oppression has left a hidden footprint on the souls of many people living in deprived areas through generational transmission, resulting in a common experience across ethnicities of social alienation, powerlessness and disenfranchisement. While there are aspects of oppression particular to colonial slavery and industrial exploitation, it is this area of shared legacy that we feel has been largely overlooked and that, uniquely, MJR wishes to highlight. This we believe will also open up new perspectives and insights into the specific aspects.

Benefitting from a major pilot study in 2007, MJR is gathering existing, and commissioning new, research into this poorly understood dynamic. The findings will be used to develop educational projects and to seek new and innovative ways to resolve injustice, promote wellbeing and encourage community reconciliation.

“In my long experience of living and working in the communities of inner-city areas of London, it seems clear to me that it is the mindset associated with the legacy of slavery (black and white) that is at the root of the social issues that led to the Tottenham riots of 2011 which spread to other areas of similar social deprivation. Unless the root causes of these social issues and their links with the legacy of slavery are recognised and faced by society, the day will come when we will see a repeat of the Tottenham riots in our inner-city areas. In times of economic austerity that day may be sooner than we expect.”

Clifford Hill, “Free At Last? – The Tottenham Riots and the Legacy of Slavery.”

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movement for justice & reconciliation

About MJR

MJR was formed as a charity in 2014 following more than a year of consultations among inner-city community leaders. It brings together representatives of a range of churches and organisations across the UK involved in Christian service, ministry and research, particularly in our inner-cities, including Micah Community Projects, Street Pastors and Urban Presence.

MJR is a Christian organisation. We believe it is God's unconditional, loving intention that all people, regardless of background, beliefs, ethnicity, gender or sexuality, should have the right to justice, dignity, skills, equality and the opportunity to work and have hope for the future.

The Work of MJR

RESEARCH

MJR is currently working in partnership with the Religious Histories Department of the Open University and with the Nazarene Theological College, Manchester to

- find and collate research into the legacy of the colonial slave trade and industrial exploitation in Britain,
- identify gaps in existing research and initiate new research,
- publish the findings of the research, together with recommendations for addressing the issues identified.

We plan to develop further similar partnerships.

EDUCATION

To disseminate the learning and evidence gathered through research MJR is actively

- developing educational material and resources for schools and other educational contexts.
- with partner organisations developing training programmes for those in church and community leadership.
- establishing one or more permanent exhibitions and Study Centres dedicated to increasing public knowledge and understanding of the effects of colonial slavery and industrial exploitation.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Knowledge needs to be channelled into positive and creative action. As a follow-up to our education work MJR is working

- with churches and community groups, particularly in areas of social deprivation, to enable greater understanding of the communities in which they work and encouraging and supporting them to develop reconciliation projects in their local areas.
- sponsoring and encouraging community reconciliation projects which increase the life-skills and employment opportunities of those who feel powerless in modern society.

We believe that this work will make a considerable contribution to improving community relationships in inner-city areas of Britain where the double legacy of colonial slavery and industrial exploitation are in evidence.



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