

From George Berkeley, to George Floyd, to George Nkencho:
The Church of Ireland and Black Theology
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“Abstract”

The 2020 police killings of George Floyd in the United States and George Nkencho in Ireland brought about a profound new awareness of racism. Floyd’s death marked a *kairos* moment for churches, in particular, while Nkencho’s death galvanised an emerging Black and Irish/Northern Irish generation of young adults. The combined effect of this global racial awakening, spearheaded by Black Lives Matter, alongside the cultural impact of the emerging Black and Irish/Northern Irish generation, had profound implications for a variety of sectors of Irish/Northern Irish society. However, in the context of this new epoch, the Church of Ireland was largely found wanting. While the Church of Ireland had engaged in a variety of racial justice initiatives over a period of a century, the cultural changes of 2020 exposed deep deficiencies in the Church’s progress. It therefore highlighted the need for a fresh paradigm to help the Church of Ireland fulfil its commitment to racial justice. Through the framework of Post-colonial Theology, Black Theology offers a new and challenging perspective for the Church of Ireland to consider. It is also able to speak powerfully into the complexities of Ireland’s religious and sectarian history and it is a significant tool by which to harness the theological voice of the Black and Irish/Northern Irish. This may lead in time towards the development of a new, distinctive Black Theology in Ireland (BTIRE). Through the case studies of George Berkeley, George Floyd and George Nkencho, this dissertation seeks to explore the extent to which Black Theology can inform and assist the Church of Ireland on its quest towards racial justice. By seeing the Church of Ireland and Black Theology through a Post-colonial Theological lens, it then identifies some practical steps for the Church of Ireland to reflect and act upon.