

URC BLACK HISTORY MONTHLY



THIRD MONDAYS 7.30-8.30PM ON ZOOM

URC Black History Monthly: Monday 15th March 7.30pm



The Kairos Document

One of the key church documents from the heart of the freedom struggle in South Africa, the Kairos Document, produced back in 1985 & 1986, has had a rich afterlife in other freedom struggles. Does it have helpful resonances with the situation in the UK today as we try to respond to Black Lives Matter? Let's re-read it and discuss it for ourselves.

The text of the Kairos Document will be available on the [URC website](#)...

ZOOM LINKS

<https://zoom.us/j/99060809545?pwd=YIFOR2k2TUozbmJiWVZPSkxMQjNXUT09>

Meeting ID: 990 6080 9545

Passcode: 264326

URC
BLACK
HISTORY
MONTHLY



THIRD MONDAYS 7.30-8.30PM ON ZOOM

Monday 15th March
7.30pm – 8.30pm

The Kairos Document

In the mid-1980s South Africa was a very Christian country. Church attendance levels were very high right across the political spectrum. Everyone was asking God for help, but there were some very different ideas as to what God's help should be:

The internal struggle against apartheid in South Africa was really firing up. The trade union movement, civic associations and rent boycotts in townships, the emergence of increasingly militant youth and the nationwide United Democratic Front were all pushing for change; the apartheid State was pushing back - first with a State of Emergency for some key areas in 1985, then a nationwide Second State of Emergency in 1986, with troops and militarised police patrolling every township, mass detentions and a range of related repressive measures. It was surely time to take sides, but where was the Church?

Some, including the white Dutch Reformed Churches were strongly supportive of the apartheid state. The largely white leadership of the 'English-speaking' Churches were forever talking about non-violence and justice and reconciliation, but to what effect? Many black churches were very 'spiritual' and wary of 'politics'. Many of those committed to the struggle got increasingly exasperated with their churches' failure to engage. What was to be done?

A group of politically aware theologians started a discussion and a process and developed a vigorous critique not just of apartheid-friendly **State Theology**, but also of the righteous-sounding but ineffectual **Church Theology** of the leaders of the English-speaking churches. Instead, they argued that Jesus and the Bible would want us to have a struggle-friendly, contextually aware **Prophetic Theology**.

This was the **Kairos Document**. It was brash and exciting. It sure stirred things up. It was followed by a sister document (***Evangelical Witness in South Africa***) prepared by a large group of 'concerned evangelicals' who'd caught the vision too. Since then, other Christians in other Struggles in other parts of the world have produced their own Kairos Documents (including Palestinian Christians).

You can find the **Kairos Document** and **Evangelical Witness in South Africa** and lots of other daughter **Kairos Documents** on the URC's [Legacies of Slavery webpage](#) along with some **introductory materials**. Do explore, try reading the Kairos Document, then join us for our March Black History Monthly conversation about the Kairos Document and what it might be saying to us in the UK today.