

## Stand up to racism by using your vote

Racism is: treating people differently because of their skin colour.

It is un-Christian – Christians believe that every person is created in God's image.

It is un-scientific – most geneticists and evolutionary scientists agree that "human populations are not unambiguous, clearly demarcated, biologically distinct groups" (American Anthropological Association).

It is illogical and unfair – Black and Asian people have fought and worked alongside us in Africa, Asia, Europe and Britain for generations.

It is dangerous – Hitler began with dividing people into those whom he deemed acceptable in Germany and those who were unacceptable, and ended with gassing the unacceptable.

The BNP is demonstrably racist: for example, it is only for whites, and it seeks not only to repatriate immigrants but also to encourage non-white British-born citizens to leave. It is for these reasons that all Christian leaders, and all the Christian denominations in our land, publicly reject parties, such as the BNP, which attract far right sympathisers to their ranks.

We, as Christian leaders here in Carlisle, therefore call upon the citizens of Carlisle to do two things: to use their votes – as all good citizens should; and – by voting for other candidates – to deny the BNP candidates any political legitimacy.

Simon Austen, Houghton Parish Church

David Hasson, Carlisle Methodist Circuit

Jim Hyslop, St John's Upperby

Alun Jones, St Herbert's, Currock

David Lennox, Salvation Army Citadel Corps

John Libby, St James, Denton Holme

Michael Manley, Carlisle Cathedral

John Mason, Wigton Rd Methodists

Richard Oakley, St Aidan's

Ben Phillips, St Michael's, Stanwix

David Pitkeathley, Church of Scotland

Richard Pratt, St Cuthbert's

Mel Robinson, Salvation Army Temple Corps

Barrie Thomas, Church of the Nazarene

Greg Turner, Our Lady and St Joseph's

Sue Wicks, St Elizabeth's, Harraby

Letter in Cumberland News 18 April 2008

Response from CHG, sent by email to Cumberland News on 21 April : –

“While we wholly endorse the anti-racist views expressed by the Christian leaders in their letter ("Stand up to racism by using your vote." Letters, Cumberland News, 18 April 2008), may we, as members of Cumbria Humanist Group ([www.cumbria-humanists.org.uk](http://www.cumbria-humanists.org.uk)), point out that these views are shared by those of us who hold no such religious beliefs – currently the majority of the UK population?

Humans have evolved over millions of years and there is greater genetic diversity within the populations of Africa – the continent where human life certainly first emerged – than between them and the populations of all the other continents.

Racial tension has so often been exacerbated by religious conflict – between Catholic and Protestant, Hindu and Moslem, Moslem and Christian – so religious extremists must accept some historical responsibility for the racism we now see in society.

But we're all on the same side in condemning the BNP and its racist stance, so let us identify our common values here and stand together to confront this evil.

(Dr) Christine Allen (Secretary, CHG)

Iain Paterson (Chair, CHG)

Richard Speirs (Vice-Chair, CHG)

Terry Greenwood (Treasurer, CHG)

John Baines

David Boulton

Ian Breach

Sidney Clare

Jan Dunckley

Susan Falder

Toby Jackson

Jean Marston

Diana Martin

John Martin

Nona Murray

George O'Hara

Roy Pomfret

(Dr) Brian Scroggie

Marjorie Smith

Tim Stevens

Deirdre Tyson

John Upson

Norman Walker

George Weston

Irene Whitfield “

(25 signatures)