



# IT IS ABOUT ALL OF US OR NONE OF US

The Conference affirms

Many systems that were aimed at ensuring justice failed us including the UN system because each got entangled in matters of each ones only and forgot the others said Prof Dr Azza Karam, Professor at the Vrije University of Amsterdam, and a member of the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Multilateralism; who was until recently also the Secretary General of Religions for Peace, making an Impulse Presentation at the Conference. She was speaking at the session on Working Together in the World of Faiths: A culture of BELONGING and INCLUSION

The presentation was followed by three short perspectives from: Dr Clare Amos, the Director of Lay Leadership – Diocese in Europe and former programme executive and coordinator for the WCC's inter-religious dialogue and cooperation. Dr Christian Nweze, a young scientist from the Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences, University of Hamburg who gave a Quantum Physics perspective to the entire discourse on Racism and Dr Peniel Rajkumar, Global Theologian at the United Society for the Partnership in Gospel and Former Programme Executive of Inter-faith Relations of the World Council of Churches.



Interreligious dialogue is one of the earliest forms of peacebuilding. However, beyond issuing declarations not much is happening in this area. In several of the conflicts rocking the world today we do not see any interfaith initiatives for peace. Similarly, overcoming racism cannot be an agenda of one religion in isolation to others. It has to be done together. Everybody should decide to respect mutuality and believe that "together it is possible". It is not about 'us' holding 'them' responsible but it is about seeing every challenge as 'our' challenge. The conference was strongly urged to take the interfaith dimension of overcoming racism seriously.



**Bible Study**

# The Cheeky Outcast: Canaanite Woman Matthew 15: 21-28

Prof. Dr Sathianathan Clarke looked at Jesus wandering in the edges of civilisation encountering the cheeky, feisty, demanding, subservice agitator- a Canaanite woman who encountered Jesus screaming for the healing of her daughter. Even when the disciples shouted- Send her Away Jesus used the opportunity as an instance of racial reconciliation. leading to healing and wholeness. Painting a kaleidoscopic vision of chosen belovedness he called the participated never to be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ.



## Yes! I have Experienced Racism!

A Panel Discussion on Practical ways of overcoming racism and envisioning a roadmap for a community free of racial prejudices was moderated by Bishop David Hamid (Moderator). The Panelists included Prof Dr Sathianathan Clarke, Dr Sonia Diaz – Monsalve, Rosette Muzigo-Morrison (former legal officer in the Office of the chief prosecutor at the ICC in the Hague, Netherlands; history of working in international, humanitarian, and human rights law). Revd Dr Patrick Schnabel (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland with wide ranging legal expertise and knowledge of Church-to-Church relationships) and Revd Dr Carlton Turner, (USPG Trustee and lecturer at the Queen’s Foundation, Birmingham, UK).



## About the Racial Justice Unit

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### About the RJU

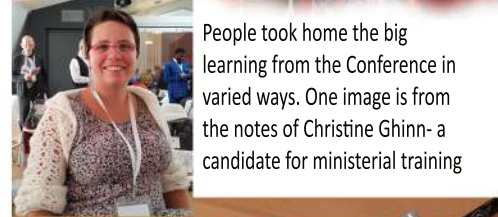
The CofE Racial Justice Unit (RJU) is a new Department of the National Church Institutions (NCIs), established under authority of the Archbishops Council. It was spun off from the old Mission and Public Affairs Department in Advent 2022 and is led by its Director, The Revd Guy Hewitt, and its Deputy Director, The Revd Canon Dr Sharon Prentis.

### The brief of RJU

Our brief is to facilitate a culture change across the Church of England, so that we become more diverse and inclusive institution.

### About ACRJ

However, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York are strongly committed to building a Church of England which is ‘younger and more diverse’. In the wake of the murder of George Floyd they commissioned the report ‘From Lament to Action’ which documented the huge number of commitments which the Church of England had made towards Racial Justice since ‘Faith in the City’ – but which it never actioned or resourced. They then established the Archbishops’ Commission for Racial Justice, (ACRJ) chaired by Lord Paul Boateng, to work over a three year period as an accountability body, spurring the Church of England to genuinely move on from lamenting its own paralysis to embracing decisive action.



People took home the big learning from the Conference in varied ways. One image is from the notes of Christine Ghinn- a candidate for ministerial training





## Experiences of People Moves Participants to Tears

Four powerful testimonies helped the conference to look at the different manifestations of how race plays out. Bishop Antonio Ablon (IFI Philippines and Chaplain St Catherine’s Stuttgart) titled his sharing as the Migrant, the Stranger in our Midst - My Journey so far.

Prof Dr Pia Lane, University of Oslo and a member of the TRC who gave a recorded presentation on in the light of Norway’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) on Injustices against the Sami, Kven/Norwegian Finns, and Forest Finns. Dr Masiwa Gunda, WCC Programme executive for Overcoming Racism shared the way he saw the issue and representatives for the Gypsy and Roma Communities shares the work done on that particular area



## Voice of Young People Catches the Attention of the Conference



### The Communication Team



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## Youth Voices Affirm there is Hope Around Us: It is Possible and We will Do It



The space for Youth Voices was the most hopeful one in the entire conference. Young people shared their experiences, frustrations, anxieties and hope. “The world is bigger than the church”, reminded Rohan. He also said we cannot build a just church with the foundations of injustice- we need to change the very foundations. We must invest in our children and ensure that they read Scriptures of other religions and grow in respect to the others. The church should not stand as a hinderance to the children but instead be the safe space of their blossoming. The language of I me mine, you he she it should be replaced by We and Us. He said.

Ella Sibley said the key is reliance and trust in one another. Ezekiel Victor pointed out that racial justice should become part and parcel of the safe guarding mechanisms of the church. Philani Thulani, said as much as we are talking about racial justice, we must realise that we among ourselves are racial too. Julius Anzoie spoke of the space that need to be created to the other so that they feel belonged. Christine talked of the vulnerability in the room and confessed that many a times we fail to see through the

eyes of the affected ones. Lizbeth Kanis said she was moved by the call to unbelong. Each of the young people who shared were affirming hope. Masiwa reminded them, ‘we are tall today because we are standing in someone else’s shoulder and we must not forget the ones who went before. The next generation will be still taller if we allow them to stand on our shoulders and that is a huge responsibility.

### Well Done!

Bishop David joined several others to thank Anglican Church in Freiburg for their exemplary hospitality

You have gone the extra mile and have marked out Freiburg not only in the Diocesan map but also in that of the Church of England as a place of the ‘gospel being lived out’. You were inviting, welcoming and meticulously systematic in planning, organizing and rolling out the event providing all logistic support to the Archdeacon Leslie Nathaniel who has pulled out a near miracle through this very significant event. The Chaplain, his family and the entire congregation and the ecumenical support they got from the neighbours deserve special appreciation.

### Well Done Leslie!!

The Conference was unanimous in acknowledging the role played by Archdeacon Leslie Nathaniel in putting together this significant conference. He was specially thanked for conceptualizing the entire programme, seeking and finding resources, reaching out to the most relevant resource persons, ensuring that the people who needed to be present were present, for carving out space for the young and for personally leading the entire event. We are sure this is just another milestone and much more would evolve from this people said. Julie was also specially mentioned in the appreciation for her support



# THE FREIBURG COMMITMENTS

The closing service of Eucharist was held at the St. Ursula's Old Catholic Church with Bishop David celebrating, Leslie preaching and Joanna Udal leading the service.

The highlight of the service was the commitments that the young participants made standing around the image of a kaleidoscope which included

- We affirm that we will be a Continuing Movement and Campaign to Ensure Greater Belonging and Healing, where each finds themselves welcomed by all, and all realise the importance of accepting each person as they are.
- We will contribute and wholeheartedly support the gospel call to create and sustain an unbiased, and inclusive world for the good of all.
- We will celebrate identity and reject discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, family economics, mobility, language, marital status, sexual orientation, ability, and religion.

- We will denounce prejudice, racism, nepotism, abuse and injustice in any form and we will speak out to disrupt these when they occur.
- We will work towards a church in which the potential and gifts of its people is given due recognition and in which leadership roles are equally and justly available to ALL. God's kaleidoscope compels the acknowledgement of a multi dimensionality of identities that makes a colourful whole and where no one is excluded or sidelined.
- We acknowledge that we may make mistakes that cause harm, and so we commit that we will continually examine ourselves through a lens of prayer and justice and transform ourselves accordingly.
- We see our calling as PEACEMAKERS and we will respond to situations of conflict through seeking healing in relationships and through healing our relationship with God.

A separate poignant Conference statement was also adopted





## Thank you, thank you and thank you again!

This week's conference was a resounding success.

The program provided a rich combination of heartening worship, thoughtful bible study and moving testimony. The participation included an extraordinary combination of experience, expertise and energy. And the occasion itself was full of warmth, companionship and solidarity.

I was especially encouraged to witness such a creative combination of wise heads and young hearts - and to see such wisdom in the young people and such youthful dynamism in the older folk. We can be very confident about the future of the church in the hands of this group of people.

On a personal level, I learned a lot. Justice is indeed a complex subject, and I'm now much more aware of how different elements of justice need to come together. I'm even trying out the new word I learned to describe all this. I've written a full report for my colleagues at Holy Trinity in Brussels and look forward to sharing further details with them so we can move things forward in our church.

I am so grateful for the imagination to create such a special event, the dedication to assemble all the necessary elements and the hard work to make it happen.

Andrew G. Tank  
Holy Trinity Brussels