

2nd PRESS RELEASE

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Churches Together In Greater Bristol: Together4Bristol: Keyboard Trust
**Voices from Pastors of White Led-
Churches & Faith Groups**
Standing Together Against Racial Injustice

The Keyboard Trust has engaged in conversations with a number of Church Leaders and Faith groups within the past month. In light of the current events that are taking place in the USA with the killing of George Floyd and Black people and those who have been harmed by the police. A press release was issued last week, with statements from Pastors from Black- led churches, who have spoken out against racial injustices within our community. The fear, anger, and distress is being felt in the UK and other parts of the world.

Equally, we have gathered several statements from a number of Pastors of White-led Churches across the city, including Bishop Viv Faull, Diocese of Bristol, Christian Action Bristol and Faith groups who are standing with us in unity. The Keyboard Trust feels that there has to be a coming together and a rising up of individuals, churches, and professional bodies, where we face up to the issues no matter how hard, and come alongside others who are hurting in solidarity.

So that together we can build strategic actions and move forward towards a better world.

Prayer plays an important part in all of human life and activity so let's petition for the Lord's intervention to restore law, order and justice.

STATEMENT FROM THE BISHOP OF BRISTOL, BRISTOL CATHEDRAL, ST MARY REDCLIFFE CHURCH AND THE DIOCESE OF BRISTOL (Tue.16 June 2020)

Work was carried out yesterday to remove a number of prominent references to Edward Colston in the windows of Bristol Cathedral and St Mary Redcliffe Church. The fall of the Colston statue on 7 June was a symbolic moment for the city and a signal for change. For us, it is the right moment to take the action we have been considering for some time. A cathedral or a church should be a place of sanctuary, justice and peace: a place where God's glory is worshipped and God's love is felt. The dedications to Colston, in two significant places of worship, has prevented many people from finding peace in these beautiful buildings. Most of these dedications have now gone and the rest will follow.

The removal or covering of window panes is also a symbolic moment. It doesn't change history and it doesn't change the fact that black people in Bristol, Britain and the world still face discrimination, injustice and racism. We must not let it distract us from the work that needs to be done. But we hope it demonstrates our renewed sense of urgency to address these issues and truly be a Church for everyone.

Bristol Cathedral, St Mary Redcliffe Church and the Church of England in Bristol have been involved in discussions and work around the trans-Atlantic slave trade, racism, identity and justice for many years and this must continue. We will complete an inventory of all our churches to identify and understand references to slavery. We will engage with black Christians, theologians, historians and all members of the community as we listen, learn and explore these important issues and agree the right course of action.

The removal of historical items is a complex subject that evokes strong feeling. We want to work with others to address the true cost of our history, heal our divisions and build a unified city of hope that values and cares for everyone. We welcome the opportunity to be part of the Mayor of Bristol's commission. What has been done today is one step on an important journey. The Bishop of Bristol, the Right Revd Vivienne Faull, has set out her commitments that will form the basis of our work and focus over the coming weeks, months and years.

Andy Street - Christian Action Bristol

"Things must change, like so many of us; we at Christian Action Bristol have also been appalled at the brutal murder of George Floyd. We are grieved at the insidious racism not only in the US, but also here in the UK and within our own city.

In humility and repentance, we want to recommit ourselves. We recommit to the listening, learning and loving way of life that Jesus set before us, and that future where everyone is equal. We recognise that things must change from here.

We commit to understanding and supporting our BAME communities better and we stand with you to play our part in seeing injustice exposed and uprooted in Bristol. Together, and with others across the city, we recommit to building a just and fair society with equal opportunities".

David Mitchell - Woodlands Church (4th June 2020)

“The very public events in America in recent days and months have stirred deep feelings in my church members. BME members have articulated their own stories of carrying the pain of feeling marginalised in their birth nation. Young people are angry. Privileged white folk like myself are soul searching and asking ‘have I lacked empathy for the injustice and hurt many have experienced”.

We stand with our brothers and sisters who have experienced racial discrimination and abuse, to affirm that we are made in the image of God and that to discriminate, dehumanise or deprive another human being on the grounds of race or colour is a sin. We repent of any blindness or hardness in our own hearts on this issue”.

Major Ian Harris - Divisional Commander, The Salvation Army, Severn & Somerset Division

“The Salvation Army’s Severn & Somerset Division stands in solidarity with people who experience racism, both in its blatantly ugly and its more insidious forms. Our hearts are heavy and hurting because it is increasingly obvious that BAME (black, Asian and other minority ethnic) people in the UK continue to suffer institutional racism in all areas of life”

David Carter - The Methodist Church Local

“What I can state is that acts of injustice towards any human being of either sex or whatever colour, language or nationality are definitely seriously sinful contradicting God’s word which states that all human beings are made in God’s image and likeness (Genesis 1: 25-6) and that he has made is all of one blood (Acts17: 26).

“I have little doubt that the vast majority of my fellow Methodists at Salem Church, Watley’s End, in the Bristol and South Glos. circuit and in the Bristol Methodist District would agree with what I have said. Our founder, Wesley, said that enslavement was the worst villainy that any person could inflict on another”.

Provincial Board of the Moravian Church - Bishops and Mission & Society Committee

“The PEC (Provincial Board), the Bishops and the Mission & Society Committee of the Moravian Church in the UK have issued the following statement on the death of George Floyd and racism: Over the last two weeks, the death of George Floyd has highlighted the harsh realities of racism and the negative impact that it has had on the lives of countless black people.

We abhor his murder and we offer our sincere sympathy to his family. Racism exists in our society and it can often go unrecognised. We are committed to taking action to challenge all

forms of racism. Everyone is equal and everyone is created in the image of God, but centuries of racism have led to the perception that some lives are valued more than others.

We call on all of our brothers and sisters to affirm and uphold one of the key tenets of the Moravian basis of faith that “We oppose any discrimination in our midst because of race or standing, and we regard it as a commandment of the Lord to bear public witness to this and to demonstrate by word and deed that we are brothers and sisters in Christ. (Ground of the Unity)”.

Revd Canon Nick Hay - St. Paul's and St Aldhelm's

“As a church we are committed to justice and add our support to the fight against racism and discrimination of any kind. We will work to see this implemented in our church and in our city. Black lives Matter”.

Lee Barnes - Vicar, Saint Stephen's, City & Holy Trinity, Hotwells

“Recent events have highlighted the painful reality and experience for those from BAME groups, in our society for decades. A mirror has been held to my white privilege and I have much to understand and to change. I reaffirm that BAME groups matter; and commit to learn from and work with people towards an equal future for all in Bristol”.

Tamar Hodos Lucas - The Jewish community in Bristol, including Bristol and West Progressive Jewish Community and Bristol Hebrew Congregation

“As Jews we are acutely aware of the need to confront racism. Jewish communities globally have a substantial history of supporting Black communities to fight inequality. Locally, we’re developing resources to foster immediate and long-term support for Bristol’s BAME communities, while taking time for internal reflection, education and dialogue stimulated by the Board of Jewish Deputies’ Commission on Racial Inclusivity. We stand beside you!”

Lead Pastors Owen and Claire Lynch - Severn Vineyard, Bristol/ Vineyard Area Leaders, West Country and Wales

“We are deeply distressed and saddened by the brutal killings of Black people in the USA by police and we want to express our solidarity with Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority communities. As a church movement we celebrate the power of unconditional love to unite all people with equal rights and mutual respect, and we commit ourselves to helping eradicate racism”.

Chris and Alice Bond - Pastors, Hope Community Church, Hotwells

“We have been horrified by the killing of George Floyd and other similar violence. These are symptoms of deeply rooted racial injustice in the US but also in the UK. We are increasingly

aware of our own white privilege and are committed to listening, learning and changing ourselves, as a church and as a city towards God's design of equality".

Stephen Newell - The Elders at Zion United Church, Frampton Cotterell

"Firstly we wish to thank the Keyboard trust for all their work: The Church of Jesus Christ is a multi-ethnic multi-racial family, within which every person is valuable. We stand alongside our sisters and brothers from all backgrounds as we pray that we all may discover the true joys and blessings of real equality and shalom".

Revd. Sally Spencer - South Bristol Methodist Church

"Racism is a terrible thing and we're sorry for the part we've played in it in the past. We want to do better, recognising the gifts of all God's people, supporting people of all races and backgrounds in our community, providing opportunities wherever we can, and remembering that "we are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 6.29)".

Paul Rhodes - Leaders of Shirehampton Baptist Church

"Party spirit is one of the aspects of the sinful flesh (Gal 5). Therefore the starting point for addressing racism, and any other prejudice, begins with self. We must oppose racism in the community and in self but maybe the better way is for the churches to be the light to the world showing how different people may come together as one family".

Stephen Petter - Bristol Area Quaker (2017)

"There can be no peace without justice; no love without trust; and no unity without equality".

Today Quakers in Bristol endorse this statement by Quakers in Britain: "The roots of racial prejudice lie deep within us, and in seeking a solution to the evil results of racial tensions we need to search our own hearts. Our belief in the significance of every individual in the sight of God and their need for an abundant life can guide us even when we shrink before the vastness of the problem."

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Bishops, Pastors & Faith Groups

1. **Bishop Viv Faull** - [Bishop of Bristol](#)
2. **Andy Street** - [Christian Action Bristol](#)
3. **Pastor David Mitchell** - [Woodlands Church](#)

4. **Major Ian Harris** - Divisional Commander, [The Salvation Army](#), Severn & Somerset Division
5. **Revd. David Carter** - The [Methodist Church](#)
6. **Revd. Chris Bond** - [Hope Chapel](#)

7. **Provincial Board of the** - [Moravian Church](#)
8. **Revd. Canon Nick Hay**- [St Aldhelms](#)
9. **Vicar Lee Barnes** - [Saint Stephen's](#), City & Holy Trinity, Hotwells

10. **Tamar Hodos Lucas** - [The Jewish community in Bristol](#), including Bristol and West Progressive Jewish Community and Bristol Hebrew Congregation
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13. **Stephen Newell** - [Zion United Church](#)
14. **Revd. Sally Spencer** - [South Bristol Methodist Church](#)
15. **Paul Rhodes** - Leaders of [Shirehampton Baptist Church](#)
16. **Stephen Petter** - [Bristol Area Quaker](#)

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