Talking about Race

Kerith Community Church

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Preface

Talking about Race is an exploratory research project commissioned by Kerith Community church following the global conversation on racism. The research explores perceptions, attitude and experiences of race, diversity, and inclusion within the Kerith Community Church.

The research, which took place between October 2020 and February 2021, intends to provide Kerith Community Church with insights and tools to better support people who experience racism and enhance efforts, as a community, to become more inclusive.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Talking about Race is an exploratory research project by Kerith Community church to understand perceptions, attitude and experiences of race, diversity, and inclusion within the Kerith Community Church.

The research was a follow up on the global conversation on racism and a series of talks with people in the Kerith community on how they had also been and continue to be impacted. Simon Benham, the Senior Pastor at Kerith, also commented, "When we heard publicly from people at the core of our community, I remember feeling a mixture of disbelief, anger and shame at what people who I count as friends have been through. I also felt regret that despite having known all of them for several years, this was the first time I had ever had a conversation with them talking about things which have so deeply impacted their lives". The leadership felt it was important to therefore expand the conversation to the entire community and create space for people to tell their stories in a step towards becoming a church which actively seeks to eliminate racism, both internally and in the wider society.

The research, which took place between October 2020 – February 2021 aimed at giving the church insights and tools to support people who experience racism and enhance efforts as a community to become more inclusive.

This report discusses the findings of the research work and presents is in three discrete parts. The first part of the report covers the background of the research and the second part of the report outlines the data that was collected from the Kerith Community Church members. The last part of the report discusses the findings and recommendations.

Background

For much of modern history, race has often been used to drive classification of societies. Race is a socially constructed categorisation that is based mainly on physical attributes such as skin colour (Bhavnani et al 2005). With racial classifications, has also come racism. This is a variety of practices, beliefs and social relations that work to reproduce a hierarchy and social structure that yields superiority, power, and privilege for some, and discrimination and oppression for others (Cole, ThoughtCo, 2021).

Race and ethnicity are often used interchangeably but it is useful to be clear about the difference. Ethnicity is broader than race and has usually been used to refer to shared cultural identities, experiences, religious practices, traditions, ancestry,

language, dialect or national origins for example Caribbean, Irish (Bhavnani et al 2005, Law Society 2020).

The public consciousness and understanding of racism in the UK has been multi-faceted. The widely known definitions of racism narrowed it down to just socially unacceptable, overt actions such as racial slurs and violent attacks that are actively done by people with bad intentions. Such definitions however strip the word of its historical meaning and do not take into account the power structure that is beneath the iceberg. This can constrain how associated injustices are identified and addressed especially in established institutions. In recent times, awareness of how racism encompasses structures which have been embedded in our society and inherited over multiple generations has increased (Lindsey, 2019). This awareness within institutions, the media and law makers in the UK has sparked conversations around constructs of racism that are often not talked about or usually taken for granted. The social ecological model (Figure 1) can be applied to understand the complex interactions of societal factorsin the reproduction of racial inequalities.

Systemic Level
- Immigration policies
- Incarceration policies
- Predatory banking

Community Level
- Differential resource allocation
- Racially or class segregated schools

Institutional Level
- Hiring and promotion practices
- Under- or over-valuation of contributions

Interpersonal Level
- Overt discrimination
- Implicit bias

Intrapersonal Level
- Internalized racism
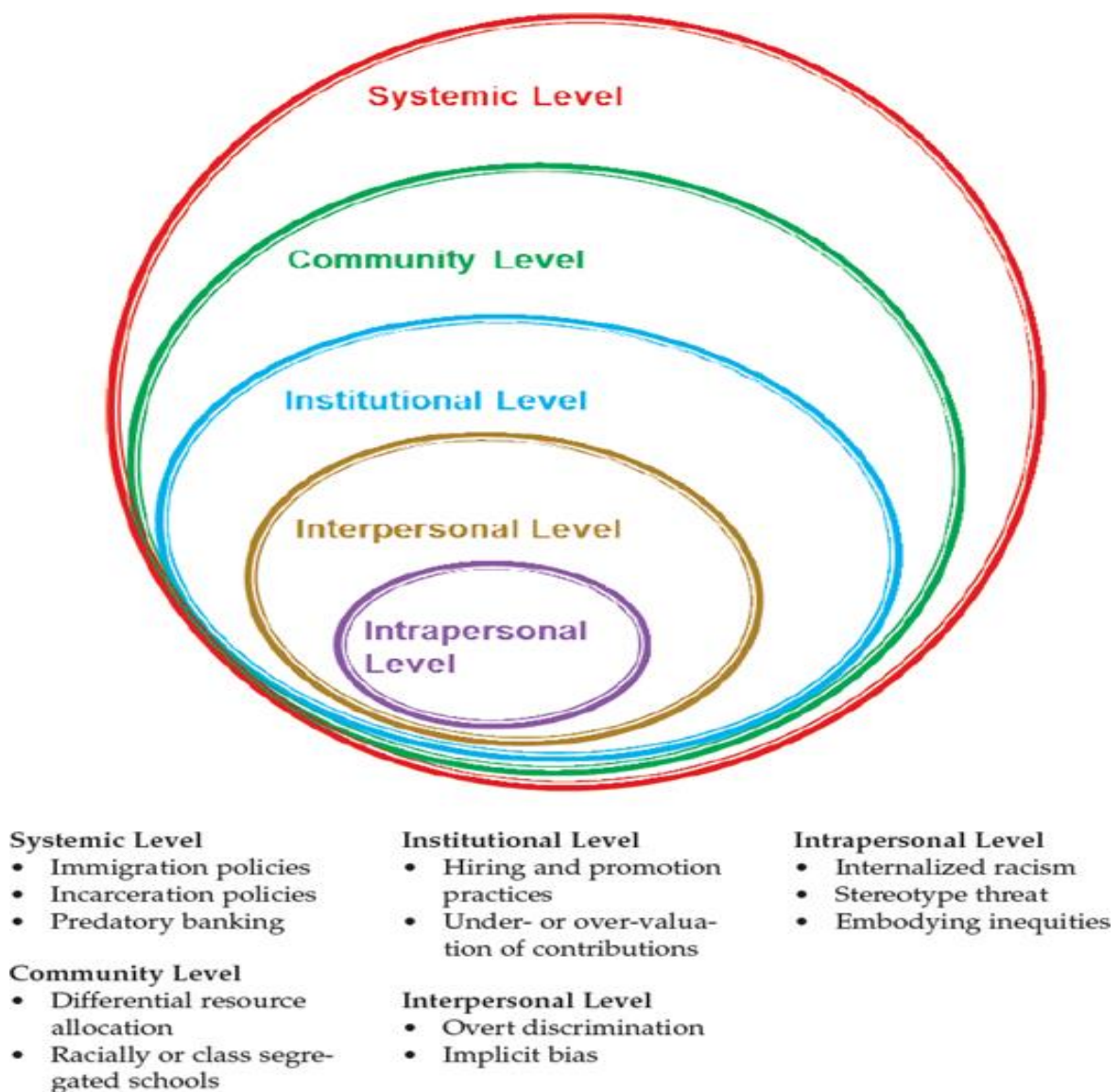- Stereotype threat
- Embodying inequities

Figure 1 Social Ecological Model (McLeroy et al, 1988)

In the Church, there has been a drive to look introspectively to understand our unique histories and contexts. Earlier in 2020, The Archbishop of Canterbury, issued a statement acknowledging the treatment of the Windrush Generation by the Church of England saying, "I'm ashamed of our history and I'm ashamed of our failure … I'm ashamed of my lack of urgent voice to the church. When we look at our own church, we are still deeply institutionally racist" (The Archbishop of Canterbury, 2020).

Likewise, other denominations have also followed suit in endeavouring to understand the experiences of the marginalised and are now incorporating actions to rectify the past in order to build a future in which the church is an example of fair and just treatment of all brothers and sisters in Christ.

Why carry out this research now?

Kerith Community Church believes that we are one church, one body with different body parts (1 Corinthians 12:12-14), as such we are called to build churches which cross national and racial divides and where we understand each other's cultures in every area of church life (Benham, 2012). Research into the perceptions, attitudes and experiences of race amongst the congregation builds on this belief by creating space to reflect on where we are, gain understanding, and listen to the voices of people who may experience racism.

When we acknowledge these experiences, this presents us an opportunity to define specific, measurable, agreed, relevant and time-bound resolutions. Diversity and inclusion efforts can therefore be a source of healing, learning and reform.

A specific approach we will incorporate is anti-racism. Anti-racism is a proactive, action-oriented and analytical approach that tries to dismantle racism at individual, institutional and structural levels. We will incorporate it mostly in the recommendation section (Race Equality Guide, 2019).

Methodology

Prior to starting the research, Kerith Community Church members engaged in a 4 week interview series about race with people who are at the core of the community. Some blog posts including literature were shared for further engagement by Simon Benham. Additionally the staff team read "We Need To Talk About Race" by Ben Lindsey, in a book club format.

A mixed methods approach was chosen for this study because it allows a research question to be studied thoroughly from different perspectives and provides insight that would not be gained from one method (Regnault, Willgoss and Barbic, 2018). The first stage of the project was a survey which was open to all members across all sites which are in Bracknell Forest Borough (Bracknell), Hart District Council (Blackwater Valley), Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (Winsdor) and the Isle of Wight (West Wight).

As we currently do not have pre-existing race and ethnicity data for Kerith Community members, we were not able to draw representative sample targets. However, using

the chart below, we can get an understanding of the race and ethnicity census data for the towns where the church sites are located. For the purposes of this study, this data is taken as representative of Kerith Community Church.
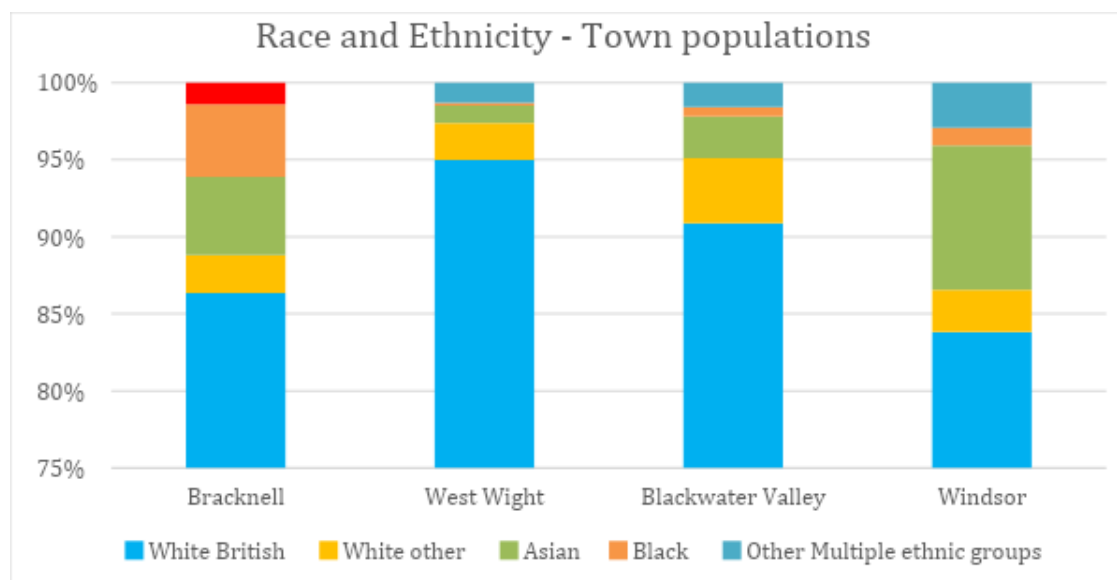

Figure 2(Iow.gov 2021, Ethnicity - Public Health Portal - Bracknell Forest Council, 2016; Hart Equality and Diversity Information 2020, 2020; Berkshire Observatory – The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead – Population & Demographics – Reports, 2020)

The questionnaire was made available on 16 October 2020 and was kept open for responses until 30th of November 2020. It consisted mainly of closed questions, with a few open-ended questions that allowed the participants to articulate their responses. The survey questions can be found in Appendix 1.

The second stage of data collection were interviews and focus group discussions with Kerith Church members and staff. Participants[1] for the interviews and focus group discussions were chosen from people who had provided their email addresses through the questionnaire and recommendations from the network of participants. Due to scheduling difficulties not everyone who provided their email was interviewed, a total of 37 people were interviewed or took part in focus groups.

A culturally sensitive counsellor was available during the course of the interview process to support interviewees if required due to the sensitivity and personal nature of the discussions.

Participants' names and identifiable data have been anonymised to maintain their confidentiality. Where participant testimonies have been recoded, the participants are identified as Participant (insert number e.g. 1). The number quoted following the "participant" does not imply the responses given are from the same participants.

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[1] Note participants of the research include Kerith Community Church staff members.

Results

Demographics

Over the weeks that the questionnaire was running, 164 survey responses were received. 161 provided information on their race and ethnicity, 17 were Black, 123 were White-British, 11 were White Other, 9 were Mixed Race, and 1 identified as Asian. These were classified according to the government recommendations of work in ethnicity in England and Wales.

Table 1 below shows a more comprehensive breakdown of the responses.

Table 1: Ethnicity of Participants

Ethnicity		Number of Participants (%)
Black	Black British of African Caribbean Descent	1 (0.6%)
	Black British	1 (0.6%)
	Black African	14 (8.7%)
	Black Caribbean	1 (0.6%)
Total Black		17 (10.6%)
Total White British	White British	123 (76.4%)
Total White Other	White Other	11 (6.8%)
Mixed Race	White and Black African	1 (0.6%)
	White and Black Caribbean	1 (0.6%)

	White and Asian	2 (1.2%)
	Any Other Mixed Background	5 (3.1%)
Total Mixed-race background		9 (5.6%)
Asian	Indian	1 (0.6)

Site participants

The participation rate was approximately 20% of the adult population at Kerith Community Church, across all four sites. It should be noted that this is based on pre-COVID-19 attendance figures.

104 participants from Bracknell completed the survey, 75 identified as White British with an additional 9 being from other White backgrounds and the remaining 20 identifying as Black, Asian, or other Mixed-Race backgrounds. Although Windsor had a 50% split of White British and participants from other ethnic backgrounds, they had the least participants (10) relative to their congregation. Blackwater Valley had 35 participants who responded, 11.4% (4) were Black, Asian and the remaining were of other Mixed Race backgrounds. West Wight had a good response rate (11) relative to their congregation size, with 90% being from White British backgrounds.

Membership Duration

- 163 people fed back on the duration of their membership of Kerith Community Church (see Table 2). Based on these responses, 17 people (10.4%) have been attending for less than a year.

Table 2: Time at Kerith Community Church

Time at Kerith	Overall	Black (within group)	White British (within group)	White Other (within group)	Mixed Race (Within Group)	Asian
Total	163	17	123	11	9	**1**
Less than 1 year	17(10.4%)	3 (17.6%)	12 (9.8%)	1 (9.1%)	1 (11.1%)	--
2-5 years	37 (22.7%)	4 (23.5%)	25 (20.3%)	2 (18.2%)	4 (44.4%)	1 (100%)
6-10 years	39 (23.9%)	6 (35.3%)	31 (25.2%)	2 (18.2%)	--	--
11-20 years	32 (19.6%)	3 (17.6%)	21 (17.1%)	5 (45.5%)	3 (33.3%)	--
More than 20 years	38 (23.3%)	1 (5.9%)	34 (27.6%)	1 (9.1%)	1 (11.1%)	--

Importance of ethnicity to identity

Only 4.5% of the sample said that race is the most important part of their identity.

Of people who occasionally or rarely think about their ethnicity, the vast majority were White British (102 out of 114).

Same treatment as others, irrespective of race

50% of the participants reported that they were treated the same as others irrespective of race, of those, 77.5% were White British. 30.6% disagreed with the idea that they were treated the same as others and the remaining 19.4% were neutral.

Within ethnic groups, Black people were more likely to disagree with this notion (64.7%). Within the comment areas of the survey, the following examples where participants felt they experienced differential treatment were provided.

> **Participant 1**: "*A supervisory position became vacant at my place of work. We were all black except the Supervisor who left. A white South African who had just arrived in the UK was brought in for me to teach him about the job. At the end of his induction period, he was made my boss. I quit the next day.*"

> **Participant 2**: "*I was treated more harshly than my colleagues if I made a minor error of any sort. Which told me as a black person I had to be perfect and I am not perfect. So, I would be frustrated.*"

> **Participant 3:** "*Growing up as a child I was called racist names, my hair was pulled, and people touched me.*"

> **Participant 4:** "*Not being allowed into clubs and bars with a group of more than four of us (black people) because they fear we're going to be a problem despite larger groups of other races being allowed in*".

Different ethnicities in friendship groups.

The question was to gain an awareness of cross-ethnic friendships and integration outside of the 'church building'.

> Most people have different ethnicities in their friendship groups. The survey revealed that White British people were the least likely to have people of different backgrounds in their friend groups at 63.4% and Mixed Race and Asian people were the most likely at over 90%.

> A concern was shared by a participant on the question of cross ethnic friendship.

> **Participant:** "*Throughout most of my life I have probably spent most of my time with people of a similar racial background even though I have regularly met people of other races. I am not aware that I have treated people of other races any differently. This current emphasis appears to be trying to make me feel guilty about something that I am completely unaware that I am/have been doing.*"

The concerns raised by the participant are not considered unreasonable however, the feelings of guilt invoked by the question give us insight into the sensitivities around race related conversations.

Participants' feelings when being involved in a discussion about race.
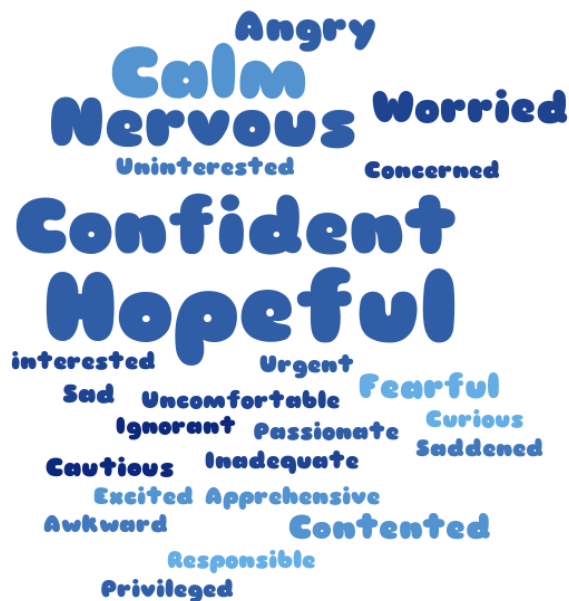
Participants could select multiple words to describe feelings they get when having discussion about race.

The responses were as follows: 41% of people felt hopeful, a further 30% felt confident or calm. In the additional comment section, many described the interview held in church a few months prior to the survey, as well as engaging with Ben Lindseys' book, We Need To Talk About Race, as a time of growing in confidence, knowledge and understanding on the issue of racism.

On the more negative side of the spectrum, 25% of people felt nervous with an additional 24% feeling frustrated and a further 10.7% felt angry. This is in line with Ben Lindsey's summary of how conversations about race can be 'petrifying' for some and a fear of being seen as racist can mean people shy away from such discussion (Lindsey, 2019). When carrying out interviews, some commented.

Participant 1: "*I'm scared of getting it wrong and the repercussions of that.*"

Participant 2: "*We never learned these things growing up, so in some way it feels new, it can feel like something that is quite removed from our realities.*"

Discussions around this question exposed the range of feelings that arise in revisiting lived experiences. Expressions of frustration as well as confidence were particularly recorded amongst participants of ethnic minority backgrounds.

Discussing and describing systemic racism

Just over 50% of the sample were comfortable discussing systematic racism.

It is also worth noting, that 67% of people who disagreed with the earlier question on whether people are afforded 'same treatment, irrespective of race', were comfortable to describe systemic racism in the UK.

First-hand experience of microaggressions

"Microaggression is a term used for commonplace verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate negative prejudicial insults toward any group, particularly culturally marginalised groups. Microaggressions seem to appear in three forms: micro-assault, microinsult and microinvalidation." (Sue et al., 2007).

Most of the people who answered have not experienced microaggressions (73.4%). 88.2% of the Black participants have experienced microaggressions and 55.6% of Mixed-Race people have also experienced microaggressions.

> **Participant 1:** *"In the workplace, colleagues acting out stereotypical "black behaviour" and expecting you to relate and find it funny. For example, A white male colleague once said when he gets angered his inner black woman comes out. (Feeding into the stereotype of angry black women). No action was taken as I felt I didn't have grounds to call it racism because it was a joke.*

> **Participant 2:** *"I wanted to volunteer with the church's children's group and the leader said that you cannot volunteer if you have been in trouble with the police, are you sure you want to do a DBS? [- with no basis for that presumption]."*

> **Participant 3:** "*Numerous times...At work I just try to ignore it. As a child I tried to cope but it hurt, and I cried. It hurts me deeply."*

> **Participant 4:** "*Someone said "you people" to me without considering my individuality."*

> **Participant 5:** *"I have been told several times I need to go back to Africa where they can understand my accent as they cannot hear a word of what I am saying here."*

> **Participant 6:** *"During a physiology and human genome class, the lecturer, who was also the Dean of the faculty, spent time proclaiming how the white race were genetically superior. I was the only black in a class of 32. I stood my ground."*

Participant 7: "*I went to a supermarket after a run just to pick something quickly. The alarm went off when 4 of us exited the store at the same time. The security guard's immediate assumption was that I was the shoplifter and let the others go. I was like here we go again. I now dress smart casually to even go to the supermarket so that they do not mistake me for a thief. I have been stopped a lot.*"

Participant 8: "*This is more difficult to put your finger on in England. You will not get called rude words like if you lived in the USA, but you feel the weight of discrimination as soon as you step out of your front door. It's everywhere, with some neighbours, at church, at work and in shops.*"

Participant 9: "*If I am assertive I am called aggressive.*"

Participant 10: "*Several unnecessary stops by police.*"

Participant 11: "*Socially people told racist jokes in front of me.*"

Among the White Other participants 36.4% have experienced microaggressions:

Participant 1: "*While working in the middle east, the locals assumed I was like all other Westerners & treated me with contempt sometimes.*"

Participant 2: "*Patients I look after see I am white [and are okay] but when my mouth opens, they become racist, especially since Brexit.*"

Of the people who have experienced microaggressions, 12% were within the last three months and 9.5% were in the last year.

A comment from another **Participant** highlights, "*Unfortunately, the rise of the xenophobic right wing in the wake of the referendum to leave the EU has been extremely worrying. They have made hate acceptable.*"

Experiences of racial discrimination

Responses to this question were not equally distributed. The majority of people (76.9%) claimed to have not experienced any racial discrimination. Some participant responses are given below:

Participant 1: "*Racism has always been part of my life which I ended up accepting as my normal life rather than when a person treats me well.*"

Participant 2: "*I have been told to go back where I came from a few times. Monkey chants in the gym, by drive by cars, mockery of my accent. Too many to count.*"

Participant 3: *"Job applications that I didn't get responses to with my first name. I had to use an English name before I began receiving call backs."*

Participant 4: *"I experienced a random, unprovoked knife attack by a group of white men on a Sunday afternoon when I was still in university and on my way to church. It was a traumatising experience.*

Participant 5: *"My wife went to pick up my child from nursery, when she entered without ringing the doorbell, she saw a staff refusing our child to eat from a table with other children. After this event, we took the child from that nursery."*

Participant 6: "*I was told people like me should not be in this country. I have been beaten up for not being white English. I find it hard to trust English people. I feel, unless I act in a certain way, I am not welcomed.*

Participant 7: "*In the 1970's I was a Service Rep for a Heathrow catering company. The airline I looked after was Air India. I was the only white person in the team and the Air India Catering Officers picked on me and always tried to find mistakes in my work."*

It should be noted that among the Black participants, 100% of participants have experienced racial discrimination. Mixed race participants had the next highest proportion of incidents of racial discrimination at 44.4%.

White others have experienced discrimination as well at 36.4%. According to the survey Asian people and White British people have not experienced racial discrimination in large numbers with 100% and 89.4% respectively.

The following are additional comments from other participants of White British background:

Participant 1: "*I was in a mixed ethnic group where I was the only White British person. On several occasions, my values, my morals, my parenting was judged and condemned based on the fact that I was British - the assumption being that I had the same values, morals and parenting techniques as those seen in the news."*

Participant 2: "*Positive discrimination against skin colour. Didn't feel right. Against God's word."*

Participant 3: "*Growing up as white minority in West London. People refused to speak English. Very confusing and hurtful."*

Participant 4: "*I was the only white half British half European on a charity board made up mainly of first-generation Black Africans who elected me and took a dislike to my prudent financial leadership. When it became obvious, I would have to resign, I delegated my key functions to the board members (so the charity could continue to function). This was met with hostility. I gave a complete handover on resigning. The board continued its excessive spending. Sometime later the inevitable financial crisis occurred, but by then I had moved on. This*

isn't the kind of thing you might be expecting, and it isn't the only black on white racist situation I have been subjected to."

Witnessing racism against other people

The majority of people, just over half at 55.3% have witnessed racism against other people and this section received the most comments. As with personal experiences of racism, some groups were overrepresented. 82.3% of Black people have witnessed racism. While White British participants have not had high reports of personal experiences with racial discrimination, just over half (51.2%) have witnessed racism against other people. Two thirds of mixed-race people have witnessed racism and white participants of other ethnicities are evenly split between the two, with over half of participants recognizing that racism happens, it becomes more important for Kerith to address racism.

Witnessing racism in the workplace

> **Participant 1:** *"I had been given the job from outside the company in preference to an Indian who was just as well qualified in the company. I now realise it was racism by the manager."*

> **Participant 2:** *"The worst case I stumbled across was where Black African applications were filed without action by a White European administrator."*

> **Participant 4:** *"In my last company I worked closely with a team in India. Others in my team were often less than polite about them. I am pleased to say that I stood up for those in the Indian team."*

> **Participant 5:** *"I have worked in London in organisations employing people from other cultures and they were not given the same opportunities for promotion as White people."*

> **Participant 6:** *"One manager had a black girl working for him and he called her racist names which were said in fun from his point of view, but I witnessed the girl wince each time. I did challenge him about this, but his response was that she enjoyed it. We did not have any policies about race at the time."*

> **Participant 7**: *"Frequently my BAME colleagues would receive racist comments and discrimination as they served customers."*

> **Participant 8**: *"A general attitude I witnessed to a black colleague (school dinner lady) at work over a period of time, other colleagues being less friendly to her than to others, more suspicious and more dismissive."*

Witnessing racism in the public

Participant 1: *"At a bus stop a woman was swearing because an Asian man stood near her in the bus shelter. In the end I just said there is no need to speak to someone like that."*

Participant 2: *"I have witnessed some people being spoken to with less patience and in a rude manner because of their race."*

Participant 3: *"I saw a group of Indian boys sitting together getting ready to celebrate their friend's stag do. Next to them was a group of Scottish guys doing the same. A white woman expressed how worried and uncomfortable she felt about the large group of Indian lads. Interesting that the Scottish guys didn't make her feel uneasy."*

Participant 4: *"Growing up in a town that had a large Pakistani population I regularly heard racial slurs and stereotypes being used derogatorily in my school, college and in public to demean people of an Asian ethnicity."*

Participant 5: *"Propel women's series using racial slurs when talking to or about black people, especially older white people."*

Participant 6: *"As a child I witnessed it daily at school, I was too young to have the confidence to stand up for the victims against the masses. I did not join in but have awful memories."*

Participant 7: *"A teacher in my school used the N-word in 2019. I reported this to the Headteacher and asked for a public apology from the teacher, but nothing was done about it."*

Witnessing racism with friends and family members

Participant 1: *"My children are non-white adoptees and sometimes people have spoken about how lucky they are to be "rescued" by me or how their race is "cruel".*

Participant 2: *"My white friend is a minister and married a Black man. The church asked for him to have a police check before being allowed to live in her church owned home once married. She subsequently discovered other minister friends marrying white husbands did not have to do the same checks."*

Participant 3: *"In the 70's one of my friends would occasionally call another friend cadb**y and jungle bu**y. They were friends and it was considered acceptable then, but I wonder how it really made my Jamaican friend feel at the time."*

> **Participant 4:** *"My nephew is black and was racially abused in a children's playground."*

> **Participant 5:** *"My wife was racially targeted in a shop. The experience was awful, and I wanted to confront the person."*

> **Participant 6:** *"Throughout my childhood and into my adulthood, I have witnessed countless examples of racism. I am ashamed to say that on many of these occasions I was the aggressor and the initiator. My family is very racist and that had a strong effect on my outlook on life. Only in the last few years have I seen the light and dropped my ignorance to the issues surrounding racial discrimination."*

Witnessing racism in the health system

> **Participant 1:** "*My wife faced many complications during childbirth due to negligence of healthcare professionals. [This is taking into account the already alarming mortality rate where black women are five times more likely to die during childbirth in the UK than white women]*."

Race and ethnicity at Kerith Community Church

Overall, 64.2% feel they attend church with people of the same ethnicity as them. White British and White participants of other ethnicities were in the majority (74.8% and 81.8%) which people of other races thought that people at Kerith are different from themselves.

Just over half of the participants are satisfied with the racial diversity of Kerith Community Church. A large portion (39.5%) are neutral with a small percentage, 6.2% being dissatisfied with the racial diversity of the church. The majority of those dissatisfied with current racial diversity (80%) were White British (Table 3).

Table 3: Race and ethnicity at Kerith

Satisfaction	Total 162	Black 17	White British 123	White Other 11	Mixed 9	Asian 1
Satisfied	88 (54.3%)	9 (52.9%)	66 (53.7%)	5 (45.5%)	4 (44.4%)	1 (100%)

Neutral	64 (39.5%)	6 (35.6%)	49 (39.8%)	4 (36.4%)	5 (55.6%)	
Dissatisfied	10 (6.2%)	1 (5.9%)	8 (6.5%)	1 (9.1%)		

Racial diversity of the Church's leadership

Less people were satisfied with the racial leadership at Kerith (44.8%). A large number of people were neutral (31.9%). 20.2% were dissatisfied with the racial leadership. (Table 4).

Table 4: Racial diversity of Church leadership

Satisfaction	Total 163	Black 17	White British 123	White Other 11	Mixed 9	Asian 1
Satisfied	73 (44.8%)	7 (41.2%)	54 (43.9%)	7 (63.6%)	3 (33.3%)	1 (100%)
Neutral	52 (31.9%)	7 (41.2%)	40 (32.5%)	1 (9.1%)	3 (33.3%)	
Dissatisfied	38 (23.3%)	3 (17.6%)	29 (23.6%)	2 (18.2%)	3 (33.3%)	

In the areas for improvement section for the church, 17 of 60 comments were on a need to have a diverse leadership structure and Eldership.

> **Participant 1***:" Having read Ben Lindsey's book "We need to talk about race" I'm so aware more than ever that the vast majority of our leaders at Kerith are white and British. Both on the office team and eldership."*

> **Participant 2:** *"Including a diverse range of ethnicities more than just black or white, such as mixed race or Asian or Arab etc too."*

> **Participant 3:** *"Within the leadership structure. It was sad to lose Lincoln and Sola from the Elder ship but so good to have Pelumi as site pastor - just a beginning."*

Participant 4: *"I would like to see a female of colour in our Eldership. Other areas which need diversity are the social justice teams, Office staff and youth leaders."*

Diversity from the platform

Regarding representation on the platform or in front of the camera, 60% of participants are satisfied with what they see and 11.7% are dissatisfied. No racial category had a large proportion of people who were dissatisfied with racial diversity on camera.

The interviews did not reveal information which differed much from the survey data, but a few interviewees stated that the church could expand their diversity by including people of different backgrounds who will give diverse life stories, using diverse language and our many journeys to and in Christ.

Participant 1: *"I am satisfied with our racial representation on Sundays from the platform/camera. I do think we could improve on our preachers as they are mainly white."*

Participant 2: *"There was a time when our preaching team was more racially balanced than at present. It is more gender balanced than racially."*

Satisfaction Level	Total 163	Black 17	White British 123	White Other 11	Mixed 9	Asian 1
Satisfied	98 (60.1%)	8 (47.1%)	75 (61%)	7 (63.6%)	5 (55.6%)	1 (100%)
Neutral	45 (27.6%)	7 41.2%)	35 (28.5%)	1 (9.1%)	2 (22.2%)	--
Dissatisfied	19 (11.7%)	2 11.8%)	13 (10.6%)	2 (18.2%)	2 (22.2%)	--

Small groups addressing issues of racism

53.8% believe that their small group or serving group is willing to address racism. About 9% disagree, with the rest of the people being neutral. White British and White others believe the small group will address racism at the highest level, at about 54% each.

Participant 1: *"I would love to host a small group composed of people from different cultures and let them, one per week, give them the opportunity to explain their culture to the group and how they came to Christ and how they feel now. We would all learn a lot from that."*

Participant 2: *"I choose not to attend a small group. It can be tiring to be the only black person all day at work and all the code switching that comes with it and then to have to do small groups in the evening too. It's tiring and at times I just need to rest."*

Is racism a problem at Kerith Community Church?

The majority of people do not believe that racism is a problem at Kerith Community Church, although nearly 42% of the people either do not know or are unsure about the situation at Kerith Community Church.

In the survey, 5% of people believe that racism is a problem at Kerith Community Church, however when individual interviews were carried out, more people could describe instances of microaggression or racial discrimination which they experienced or witnessed someone else's experiencing.

Most participants (74%) are comfortable talking about race with other Kerith Community Church members. However, this was not evenly distributed amongst the racial categories. Among Black people, only 29.4% were comfortable talking about race with other Kerith Community Church members. A participant expressed why there may be issues in people speaking out:

Participant 1: *"I would want to feel people can be open about prejudices they have faced within the church, but I feel people cannot be open because they don't want to rock the boat, sour relationships or are afraid/concerned about causing offence. Being vocal about such issues within any setting makes people think you are the problem and a difficult person."*

Additional comments for improving racial inclusion at Kerith Community Church have been combined with responses from individual interviews.

'A seat at the table' - Leadership

Participant 1: *"Current leadership really needs to do away with tokenism and really value black people and other minorities. We will continue to lose our black leaders. Anti-racism means White leaders need to do more than just having Black people on the platform."*

Participant 2: *"If we talk about inclusion of ethnic minority leaders, we have to ask, are their opinions welcome? Or are they sieved through? Are their stories welcome? What about their identities? Are they trusted? Are they given the benefit of the doubt?"*

Participant 3: *"Be more encouraging to people of ethnic minority groups to apply for church posts and put themselves to serving from the front."*

Participant 4*: "Once you are in the community and active, you start hitting against cultural barriers."*

Diversity in worship

Participant 1: *"There needs to be more open discussion about different styles of church that come from different cultures, so we understand and celebrate them as one family."*

Participant 2: *"Church has done well in introducing the half night of prayer and the News Year's Eve watch night. More to go to represent different worship practices."*

Participant 3: *"I was a worship leader in a previous church. I auditioned to be part of the worship band and it took a long time before being allowed on board. All my suggestions for worship songs were never really taken on board. Despite a wide catalogue, it seems there is one style, and we must stick with it."*

Participant 4: *I think this is great and pleased to see Kerith leading this, would be great to learn about different cultures as part of this as it helps us realise, we are part of God's creation that is so much bigger and there are lots of things for us to learn from other races (like different ways to worship)*

Lack of a sense of belonging

Participant 1: *"I guess my version of the Peach and Coconut...easy to get into but hard to become one with unless you are already a part of the core itself."*

Participant 2: "*It is and has been very easy to join the church but anything further than that is hard. I accept that Kerith is a big church and you have to belong to a house group if you want to feel like you belong but yet at the same time, I feel that church should not be like this."*

Participant 3: *"It seems if someone is to be recognised or have any interest in them, they need a "champion" who will speak of their trustworthiness. If you have not got anyone fighting your corner to be integrated, it's very easy to be left on the side-lines."*

Integration within the community

Participant 1: *"I think it is good to be talking about it, we should be making every effort to keep the unity of the spirit and remembering we have all been adopted into the same family. We could encourage inter racial small groups. I have realised I am in 2 groups and we are all similar ethnicities."*

Participant 2: *"We need to do away with a culture of favouritism, cliques and "flavours of the month" and really get to know people not because of what they can add to you but what you can add to them - that in my opinion is the servanthood we are called to. I speak from a position of one that will be viewed as a favourite. Let's all do the work of finding people at the back and bringing them forward".*

Participant 3: *"Not black people speaking to black people and white people speaking to white people, as has been observed by visitors."*

Participant 4: *"I think all of us could walk across the room better' we tend to gather with people that like us. It is across all ethnic groups etc. You would see it after church different ethnic groups chatting together."*

Participant 5: *"I think it's about changing mindsets from seeing people as passing through but rather as here to stay."*

Participant 6: *"When I started, I used to sit downstairs but people wouldn't really speak with you, even during the giving time, so I started going upstairs. I was more comfortable seeing familiar faces who will ask how you are doing and how your family is etc. I have been sitting there for the last 5 years."*

Participant 7: *"I've noticed a few people will chat with you when you are out at the kids school events which is great. I think if we had more of this, people can build genuine friendships and really get to know each other as a family."*

Participant 8: *"I find it really odd that you may speak with someone in church on Sunday and even serve together but when you see them in town or elsewhere, they try not to make eye contact with you and pretend you don't exist."*

Participant 9: *"I've challenged myself; I'd like my 40th birthday party to reflect the diverse friendships that I have compared to my birthday 10 years prior.*

Volunteering and Serving

Participant 1: *"I am part of a serving group with majority black ladies serving. When I started offering to serve in different teams, I was always told we don't need help. The language was polite yet it was not open. So black women invited each other and formed a good team. We have grown so close with each other. I also serve in other areas."*

Pastoral Support

This is not an exhaustive list but it mentions names that were commonly brought up during interviews.

Participant 1: *"Simon has always made the effort to speak with people, know who you are and get on with them".*

Participant 2: *"When Elder Sola was around, he took an active step in inclusion of people from diverse backgrounds, visiting them and praying for them. This helped in the integration of more people into the community".*

Participant 3*: "I'm really grateful for Beccy, she connected me with people very early on".*

Intersectionality - of other marginalised characteristics

Participant 1: *"I think the church also needs to address disability inclusion particularly autism and learning difficulties as people are excluded because of not fitting the norm and people do not know how to talk or include and as such are left on the side lines."*

Participant 2: *"I understand they are trying their best but the issue around racism is also poverty, class and other issues, and these need to be understood too."*

Participant 7: *"I think we can keep challenging ourselves to be more accessible to people of different education backgrounds in the stories we tell, examples we use and the language we use."*

Training and hope for the future.

61% of people would like to attend a short course and the number rises to 63% when considering if they would be willing to participate in a small group discussion. In addition, we have had contact with two small groups who had already started to go through Ben Lindsey's book which was very promising.

Participant 1*: "I'd be interested in how much unconscious bias there is in myself and others."*

Participant 2: *"We have started to go through the book in our small group and it has been very insightful. I would really recommend other small groups to do the same."*

Participant 3: *"Let's keep talking and listening then activate learning."*

Participant 4: *"Nothing else to say other than I love that we are having this conversation. I have been challenged to examine any unconscious bias I didn't realise I had. So, thank you!"*

Participant 5: *"When opening the discussion, talk about the unacknowledged biases we have, language to use, the extent of our white privilege. Let it always be an ongoing conversation that we are never finished with. Talk about race*

from scripture, challenge western perspectives that might inherently be there. How parents can help address this and teach our kids well."

Participant 6: *"I think this research project is an excellent idea and applaud your work in trying to think deeply about these issues in an attempt to create lasting and fundamental understanding and then change in both our community and our personal lives, and then to have an impact outward on the people we know and communities we are part of."*

Focus Group - Youth

The survey had a low response from the 18 – 30-year-olds category. We therefore carried two focus groups, one with over 18's who had attended Youth service at Kerith Community Church in the past and another with teenagers who are currently part of the Youth group. Of the teenagers who are part of the youth, we mainly had opt-ins from youth whose parents had already taken part in the research despite sending out an invitation to the whole youth population.

The consensus from both groups was that they found youth to be an enjoyable time to learn and grow in Christ however there were incidents of racial discrimination and they felt it is important to share.

Below is the feedback given by the focus groups:

Microaggression

> **Participant 1:** "*Incidents of microaggression did take place but we didn't always feel like we could say something. One youth leader would greet everyone with Hi fives but when he reached the black youth, he would use rapper lingo and fist bump us.*"

> **Participant 2:** "*Sola was always introduced as the "crazy uncle", some people called his cultural clothes pyjamas despite knowing they weren't and would be referred to by stereotypes like "Are you as excited as Sola loves chicken.*"

> **Participant 3:** "*There was a time when the Filipino accent was constantly mimicked from the stage, rice jokes were made and the girls from the Philippines named "The Asians" during game times.*"

> **Participant 4:** "*Black and Asian youth were called "the ethnics" by the Youth pastors in team time and on the platform. While we did not choose the name, we gravitated (to each other) in these groups. It was now normalised to call us that, we noticed younger youth started to refer to us as "ethnics".*"

Dealing with incidents of racism

Participant 1: "*When incidents of racism took place, we felt it was downplayed repeatedly and said that we are Christian first and race doesn't matter.*"

Participant 2: "*'The Kingdom Card'. Whenever I would raise concerns over racial stereotypes, I would be reminded that we are part of God's kingdom and Gods kingdom is greater than race, which I felt was used to justify ignorance and put "a plaster on a wound" without taking the opportunity to get to the bottom of the concerns and learning from them.*"

Participant 3: "I think sometimes we needed an adult who would help sort this out. At the time, I was not able to articulate what we experienced like I can now."

N-Word incident

Participant 1: "*There was an incident when the n-word was said during a Friday night game by a white boy to a black boy – it was so memorable to us. A Life parent stood in and publicly showed displeasure with what took place. However, her response was later described as too harsh. The black youths were separated as we were "too emotional" and asked to forgive the perpetrator.*"

Participant 2: "*Ben Oliver eventually did handle the situation well and suspended the boy from youth for two weeks and this gave us confidence in issues being handled well.*"

"All the black girls sit together"

Participant 2: "*When we come to church, we are making a conscious decision to be present each week, knowing we might experience microaggressions. We end up finding comfort amongst each other where we won't be mocked for things that are important to who we are. We don't need to whitewash ourselves for example our accents, our family life, our food, our body image or our hair.*"

Participant 2: "*During the week, we are usually the only black girl at school and when we get together, it's a time to be ourselves, without being "black for white people".*

Participant 3: "*White girls were often in groups together and they were never accused of being cliquey.*"

Participant 4: "*We have noticed that the ethnic minority teenagers do not get picked to be in any roles of responsibility or to be leaders. We are there for setting up and setting down and that's it.*"

Participant 5: "*I attended the revolution band for 3 years and I was never picked to join the worship team and they could never give me a reason why. This demotivated me and the others, so we just left in the end.*"

Main findings

The aim of this research as mentioned in the introduction is summarised below:

Look at the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of race amongst the Kerith Community Church congregation. The aim is to reflect, gain understanding and listen to the voices of people who may experience racism.

Perceptions and attitudes of race

The questionnaire covered topics such as awareness of diversity, cross-ethnic friendships, racial discrimination in a variety of forms and action for the future.

41% of the participants felt 'hopeful' and confident when talking about race. The survey and the interviews also show that 50% of participants feel confident to discuss race in their small groups as well with other Kerith Community Church members. This shows us the church is a relatively safe space to start and guide discussions around race. Two small groups had independently started reading Ben Lindsey's book 'We need to talk about race', which is a positive outcome .

We also found most people from diverse ethnic backgrounds have sadly experienced racial discrimination of varying degrees. 100% of Black people who responded had experienced racial discrimination in their everyday lives. Over 55% of participants had witnessed an example of racism happening to other people. It's interesting to note that this is not specific to only one ethnic group and seems to cross over both in society and in the church, bringing to our consciousness the prevalence of racism in the public, in the health system, in workplaces and to our families and friends.

Current assessment of perceptions and attitudes gives a baseline that can be developed into an annual or bi-annual questionnaire to measure behavioural change in the community.

Diversity, inclusion and belonging

"Embracing diversity is like inviting people to the party; inclusion is inviting them to dance, but belonging means we host the party together" (Meyers, 2019)

Diversity is a relational concept which shows up in the composition of a group. So while a person is not "diverse", they may bring a diverse range of experiences and identities; two of those being visible race and ethnicity. Generally people believe Kerith Community Church is diverse, people can 'see' and interact with people from different ethnic backgrounds, more so at the Bracknell and Windsor sites and the Sunday online meetings.

We also see an awareness of the importance of diversity across the community evidently in many positive comments about the research, as well as the 23.3% dissatisfaction of diversity in leadership or recognition of underrepresented ethnic minorities such as people from Asian backgrounds.

Inclusion

Inclusion is the engagement and participation of people who are part of a group and not necessarily a natural consequence of a diverse team. In the interview stage, most people from ethnic minority backgrounds were involved in the church through serving or small groups, though we cannot conclude whether this is reflected across the whole community due to our sample size.

A pattern that was noted were pockets of racially separate social groups. We see this at an intergenerational level, from where people sit in church, to youth groups and serving teams. As noted by a participant *"I think all of us could walk across the room better. We tend to gather with people that look like us. It is across all ethnic groups etc. You would see it after church different ethnic groups chatting together".* While diversity is there, in some areas, the lack of integration can be observed.

In the youth focus group, some retreated due to feeling a sense of exclusion of their identity and not being able to fit in, *"we don't [want] to whitewash ourselves for example our accents, our family life, our food, our body image or our hair".* This response can be described as Racial Isolation, a psychological response to encountering racial trauma, where separation and distancing is a method of self-preservation (Mehta,

2019). People then tend to retreat with other people of a shared identity where they create a safe space to share stories. This method of coping also relates with the social response of 'integration fatigue' mentioned in 'We need to talk about race', (Lindsey 2019) where one has to take off the 'mask' or drop the code switch.

In serving teams, volunteer recruitment styles like "Shoulder Tapping" have been commonly mentioned as helpful ways to encourage inclusion and reach people 'at the back' or those who may be a culture fit for the church community. As such recruitment styles are relationship based, the serving teams subsequently mirror relationships that are already in the community. So when you have existing relationships outside of your race, it's easier to 'tap shoulders' of people outside your race. Such feedback challenges us to find ways to encourage more cross-ethnic friendships where people are learning and sharing different cultures, breaking bread and doing life together. The result of this can be seen in authentic integration in church life, how people take up space and feelings of being in it together.

Belonging
"Diversity and Inclusion may capture your head, but belonging captures your heart" (Wadors, 2016)

Belonging is the feeling of psychological safety and support when there is a sense of acceptance and inclusion of the identity of a member of a group (Agarwal, 2019).
The research revealed that even though there is diversity and a reasonable level of inclusion, some people did not feel a sense of belonging as stated by one of the participants "I really don't care so much about representation. I care more about not feeling out of place. I want to be seen as a unique individual, not only because of my skin colour but because of the life experience I share with my community".

When exploring what belonging feels like in the leadership experience of people from ethnic minority backgrounds, a participant asks "Are their opinions welcome? Or are they sieved through? Are their stories welcome? What about their identities? Are they trusted? Are they given the benefit of the doubt?". These questions bring to light the concern of an often invisible mechanism of 'othering'. Othering is a pattern of subtle

exclusion and marginalisation based on having identities that are different from the dominant culture or norms. It is often unconscious assumptions which then influence the experiences of those in the 'in group' and those in the 'out group', resulting in microaggressions etc.

Using the analogy of 'hosting the party together', designing spaces of belonging means integrating the unique aspects of who people are, valuing them and giving them a voice that is reflected in the style, the taste and the way things are done in church. Continually asking ourselves questions means an openness to listening, seeking out and committing to constantly adapting our structures and environments.

Leadership

The diversity in Kerith church has increased over the years, this can be seen by the growing number of people from ethnic minority backgrounds in leadership positions, on staff and in volunteer teams. The participants mentioned how leadership has been welcoming in their interpersonal interactions, from the platform and in responding to conflicts resulting from racism within the church community. The proactive step in exploring the discussion around racism has received a positive response - *"I'm quite impressed by how the leadership teams have decided to take a stand to be educated around racial issues and take action in favour of people from ethnic minorities".*

17 of 60 comments mentioned a need to diversify leadership, this is particularly following two Black Elders stepping down in the last couple of years. Whilst there may be representation in the lower levels of leadership such as volunteer teams and small groups, participants recognised the need to diversify in the higher levels of decision making. The opportunity for diversity in leadership is a chance to bring fresh perspectives that won't only 'fit the culture' but will add to the culture.

Kerith Community Church has a strong history of intentional discipling of the community. Currently 840 people belong to a small group, others have taken further steps in growth track courses, theological training and in the past, the Academy. These existing structures can be maximised by listening to members from ethnic minorities who may have unique barriers to their integration and culturally adapting pastoral and discipleship programmes. For example, research into the impact of discipleship on

wellbeing reveals that the **church plays a significant role in the social and spiritual connectedness of immigrant communities**, becoming a family away from home resulting in high commitment rates (Azzopardi, 2019, Kalilombe, 1997). Therefore embracing programmes which have cultural significance to recent immigrant communities such as home visitations by leaders or baby naming ceremonies may not necessarily be the way things are done, yet may be greatly valued by people who are part of the Kerith Community. An additional way that may be helpful is peer-mentoring with other leaders of communities who are represented in the church e.g. Fillipino majority churches or leaders of black majority churches.

Most strategies mentioned above are context specific and require active learning. Becoming an anti-racist church is therefore learning the historical and contemporary contexts of racism and critically engaging with our position as individuals as well as a church community. It is clear there are still varying levels of understanding of the term 'racism' and what it means to people. Active learning therefore means examining these meanings, blind spots and at times defence mechanisms which can be unconscious and embracing the complexities of that part of the journey with sincerity.

By understanding the contexts of racism, and the deep wounds that may be experienced by people in our community, we can ensure we are creating safe spaces to facilitate such discussions and people are guided in gaining more racial literacy through training. Concerns did still arise from a participant *"I would want to feel people can be open about prejudices they have faced within the church, but I feel people cannot be open because they don't want to rock the boat, sour relationships or are afraid/concerned about causing offence. Being vocal about such issues within any setting makes people think you are the problem and a difficult person."* We therefore need to continually examine how our culture handles conflict and we can adapt the emotionally healthy spirituality practices. This also needs to be integrated in the way complaints and incidents are recorded.

Steve Tibbett of Kings Church London, a multi-cultural church in South London shared how pastoral and legacy issues from slavery, colonialism and on-going racism are huge (Tibbett, 2008) and will not disappear by not being acknowledged. This implores

us to explore theological frameworks that help us to understand our current racial climate with a foundational biblical understanding. How can we diversify our theology of lamentation, grief and loss? What does the gospel say about the liberation of the oppressed? How do we bring a prophetic voice to foster an environment that we do not see in society? This can filter through to diversifying our worship. Kings Church currently employs a Teaching Pastor, Andrew Wilson, who has been working in diversifying their biblical narrative. Such a model can be decentralised across our sites and applied to empower more people in their various ministry areas as well as our preaching teams and worship team.

Synergy in the staff team

The staff team described a positive, values led and emotionally healthy work culture. This has mainly been through investment by line management into personal development of staff, a strong team culture and a sense of trust in exploring and learning the different aspects of their work. The result of this can be seen in the high job satisfaction comments and high retention rates amongst office staff. Note that those staff members that participated in this research are both employees and members of the Kerith Community Church and this may introduce some bias. The recruitment of staff from ethnic diverse backgrounds has been lower than desired but this can be due to low applicant rates.

Perceptions and attitudes on racism, diversity and inclusion from the staff have been positive. Although there are varying levels of engagement, the opportunity to explore the book 'We Need To Talk About Race' provided a great starting point for the team. Others spoke of growing in confidence in starting conversations about race. Some staff from ethnic diverse backgrounds also shared how colleagues have begun 1:1 conversation to check in how they are feeling about the current climate and engaging in dialogue around different racial experiences, which has been a good outcome. For long lasting commitment and impact, the current best practice can be incorporated into organisation policies e.g. Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging policy.

Youth

Finally we discovered youth from ethnic minority backgrounds noted incidents of racial discrimination both in the past and in the present. The long term impact of such experiences can be as a parent further commented "*It's sad to say that our children have attended the church since they were young, however they never want to return, having experienced a more inclusive church community elsewhere which is sad for me given my love for Kerith*". However there is the opportunity to train the youth team to be able to facilitate and resolve issues of racial discrimination in real time.

Pete Scazarro talks of the sin of racism being one that can be passed from generation to generation so we are to actively uproot it at all levels (Scazzero, 2015). Therefore it is important for the church to be vigilant in making sure that efforts of overcoming colour blindness and unconscious bias take an intergenerational approach. Silence about race with young people does not keep them from noticing race however it usually just keeps them from talking about it (Aboud, 2005; Tatum, 1997).

Another helpful way is equipping parents to facilitate race conversations. UNICEF [Talking to your kids about racism](#) guide may be a good space to start with age appropriate platforms. Current studies show us Generation Z (Gen Z) are a social justice conscious generation with a keenness to engage on platforms such as TikTok. In a study in the UK, 72% of Gen-Zers say they've become more interested in activism and social causes since the pandemic began which should inspire hope in the young people's ability to play an active role in social justice.

Recommendations

Following feedback from the community and interviews with staff, below are suggested recommendations (Table 5) for the staff team. These recommendations form a basis for a diversity, inclusion and belonging strategy. When they are embedded into organisational processes, they build momentum and create the conditions for positive outcomes.

Table 5: Summary of recommendations

Leadership	**Elders** 1. 5-year commitment of Elders vision to Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging strategy 2. To establish Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging strategies in theological framework ● E.g. Biblical concepts of grieving, lament, repentance, and liberation of the oppressed.	**Implementation Task Force** 1. External team - Following the model of Employee Resource Groups – form a volunteer team with members from diverse ethnic backgrounds who are **knowledgeable** about racial inequality and are active in the marketplace. 5. Internal team - Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging team of middle to senior management. Responsible for the implementation of the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging strategy.	**Leadership Development** 1. Formalised leadership development programme targeted at Ethnic Minority members with an intergenerational approach. ● Youth ● Entry level leaders- e.g. internships ● Middle to senior level leaders 2. Mentorship and leadership development of ethnic minority staff	**Monitoring** 1. Record ethnicity data for all Kerith Community members on Church Suite. This will inform targeted action for different groups. 2. Adapt survey/research for bi-annual measurement.

	3. Budget allocation for Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging implementation across different teams. 4. Commitment to diversify Eldership and Church leadership			

Site Pastors	**Theology training** 1. Support training of Site Pastors/ Preachers to explore diverse theology frameworks and histories. e.g., Queens Centre Postgraduate Taster course**.**	**Anti-racism training e.g.** Anti-Racism 101	GCORR: Online Learning (teachable.com) 'Required Skills for White People Who Want to be Allies'- United Methodist Church		
Operations	**Policies** 1. A clear Diversity, Inclusion and belonging policy - mention of anti-racism practice. 2. Clauses within the complaints procedure and safeguarding policy that specifically define and address racial discrimination.	**HR** Attend race specific Diversity and Inclusion themed training to keep informed on related issues and wider debates. e.g., Diversity Network 1. Strive for ethnically diverse recruitment panels and targeted outreach to underrepresented ethnic groups. 2. Identify strategies to reduce unconscious bias where blind recruitment is not possible	**Monitoring** 1. Incorporate measures of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging measures in the '5 perspectives to Measure' for the staff team. 2. Monitoring growth of all people from ethnic minority backgrounds ● Build Character ● Empower leads. ● Finding Community	**Training** 1. Anti-racism training for all staff

Engagement	**Social media** 1. Online campaign that is aligned with stories representing ethnically diverse backgrounds. ● Essays, stories ● E.g., <u>30 Days of anti-racism</u>	**Accessibility** 1. Translation system for non-English speaking community ● literature		
Experience	**Production** 1. Research into diverse voices e.g., the creative planning research stage ● Widen the feedback pool. 2. Regularly redefining what Kerith style is/feels/looks like	**Worship** 1. Integrating different worship styles ● Time in worship ● Sound of worship 2. Active recruitment of people in underrepresented ethnic groups. 3. Theologically diverse approach to worship e.g., Liberation theologies	**Sundays/ One church Events** 3. Exploring food, cultures, and other traditions for one church events.	
Pastoral	Develop culturally specific pastoral approaches for ethnic minority groups who are underrepresented and/or excluded. ● E.g. home visitations, baby dedication and naming ceremonies	**Small groups** 1.Anti-racism training for all leaders 2. "Sounding board" champion for small group leaders to ask questions.		

Families	**Youth** 1. Anti-racism training for youth leaders. 2.Skills development programme ● E.g. Active Horizons leadership programme ● Team building, conflict resolution, inclusion, and advocacy	**Kids** 1. Imagery in kids bibles, stories, and examples 2. Series on racial inclusion and diversity – including parents ● e.g, Project: Ready, Learning for justice 3. Connecting parents from different ethnic backgrounds.		
Social Justice	1. Support readily implementable and scalable programmes. ● E.g. Filipino community and Covid-19 response in Bracknell ● Collaboration with charities supporting Nepalese community in Harts District Council ● UKHK.com ● Traveller communities	**Advocacy - Social justice (vs social welfare)** 1. Targeted projects in collaboration with Borough councils and other local stakeholders ● e.g., Brighton and Hove council actions	**Monitoring** 1. Record ethnicity of all people supported. ● Except for CAP	

Researchers comments

We are grateful to Kerith Community Church leaders for commissioning the research and encouraging participation to all members through various platforms. We are grateful to the participants for being forthcoming and vulnerable in sharing their personal experiences and thoughts. This provided depth for the research findings and recommendations to be drawn. These will be useful in formulating a Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging strategy.

Challenges

One of the main limitations was the low participant response rate compared to other recent surveys by Kerith Community Church. This may be due to lower online engagement due to lockdown restrictions and not meeting in person. We therefore extended the interview stage and kept the survey open for longer as we were asking other participants to share it with their networks. That said, it is also worth noting that it may also bring to light concerns of trust around such a sensitive topic.

Conclusion

The study has revealed the participants' perceptions, attitudes and experiences of race give a good basis to implement interventions to eliminate unconscious bias, increase awareness of various forms of racism and increase our inclusion and belonging efforts. The study sheds some light on areas that need to be improved as cited in the recommendations. It is hoped that Kerith Community Church leadership would make a holistic effort to bridge the gaps identified and continue to make Kerith a home for all ethnicity backgrounds, resulting in positive wellbeing and spiritual outcomes.

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Appendix 1

Talking About Race – Survey Questions

Survey Page 1

The survey is in response to our ongoing conversation around systemic racism and becoming an actively anti-racist church.

The first stage of this will be listening to understand our individual perceptions of race, racism and where that fits within the church.

We would like to hear from you.

Please find below terms that are mentioned that may be in the survey.

Systemic racism is defined as racial prejudice combined with the misuse of power by systems. It refers to the ways in which public policies and institutional practices contribute to inequitable racial outcomes. Systemic racism is present in three levels: institutional, cultural, and individual.

Antiracism includes removing barriers and obstacles that prevent the full participation of people who experience racism and changing practices, policies that are exclusionary.

Microaggression is a term used for brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative prejudicial slights and insults toward any group, particularly culturally marginalised groups.

No attempt will be made to connect your answers with you as an individual unless you choose to share your name. We invite you to answer demographic questions so we can better understand how perceptions differ for people in different demographic groups. This information is confidential.

If you have any questions or if you would like additional information, please contact Natalee Matsekeza talkingaboutrace@kerith.co.uk

Survey Page 2

I, _____, understand that I am being asked to participate in a survey/ activity that forms part of Kerith Community Church Talking about race research projects. It is my understanding that this survey has been designed to gather information about the following topic: Race, racism,diversity and inclusion.

I have been given some general information about this project and the types of questions I can expect to answer. I understand that this survey will be conducted online and that it will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes of my time to complete.

I understand that my participation in this project is completely voluntary and that I am free to decline to participate, without consequence, at any time prior to or at any point during the activity. I understand that any information I provide will be kept confidential, used only for the purposes of completing this assignment, and will not be used in any way that can identify me. All survey/questionnaire responses, notes, and records will be kept in a secured environment. If I decline it, it will be destroyed by the researcher.

I understand that here are no risks involved in participating in this activity, beyond those risks experienced in everyday life.

I have read the information above. By singing my initials below and returning this form, I am consenting to participate in this survey by Kerith Community Church.

Survey Page 3

Demographic

My age in years is between

- 18 – 30
- 31 – 50
- 51 – 70
- Over 70

My Gender identity is.
- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to say.

My self -identified racial and ethnic identity is.
Black African
Black Caribbean
Any other Black background
White and Black Caribbean
White and Black African
White and Asian
Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background
Indian
Pakistani
Bangladeshi

Chinese
Filipino
Any other Asian background
Arab
Any other Arab background
White British
Any other White background

I have been part of Kerith Community Church for:

- One year or less
- Two – five years
- Six – 10 years
- 11 than 20 years
- More than 20 years

The site that I attend:
- Windsor
- West Wight
- Blackwater Valley
- Bracknell

I am involved with church in the following way (please tick all that apply)
- Attend a small group.
- I volunteer on a team once a month.
- I volunteer more than twice a month.
- I am on the staff team.
- I have a child at work/ youth.
- I just attend on a Sunday]

Survey Page 4

Race and me (Perceptions and attitudes towards racism)

My ethnicity is the most important part of my identity.
My ethnicity is an essential part of my identity, but there are other things I think are more important.
My ethnicity is something I occasionally think about
I rarely think about my ethnicity and do not think it is important in my identity.

I have people from an ethnically different background to myself, in my close friendship circle.

- Yes
- No

In my everyday life, I am treated the same as people who do not share my race or skin colour.
- Strongly agree – strongly disagree (1- 5-point scale)

I have had a first-hand experience of microaggressions or assumptions about my ability, character or behaviour based on stereotypes of my race?
- No
- Yes [if yes, when did it take place?]
- Within the last 3 months
- Within the last 1 year
- Within 1 year – 3 years
- Over 5 years ago
  [*allow people to choose more than one answer]

If yes, please describe as many situations as you are comfortable with and if you took action and how did you respond after the event?
(open box)

I have experienced racial discrimination in my everyday life e.g., workplace, education, health, public
- No
- Yes [if yes, when did it take place?]
- Within the last 3 months
- Within the last 1 year
- Within 1 year – 3 years
- Over 5 years ago

I have witnessed an example of racism or racial prejudice happening to somebody else.
- Yes
- No

If yes, please describe as many situations as you are comfortable with and if you took action, how did you respond after witnessing the event?
(open box)

Survey Page 5

Race and Kerith Community Church (personal and observer experiences)

Diversity
Do you feel others who attend Kerith Community Church are predominantly the same ethnicity as you or different to you?

- The same
- Different

How satisfied are you with the current level of racial diversity of people who are part of Kerith Community Church?
- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

How satisfied are you with the current level of racial diversity of people in positions of leadership?
- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

Do you feel represented when you look on stage?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

Do you feel racism is a problem at Kerith Community Church?
- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- I do not know.

When I'm with people from Kerith Community Church, I'm comfortable talking about social injustices that arise from racism.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree.

People within my small group/ serving group are willing to address tensions that arise from racism.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree.

How high would prioritise anti-racism within Kerith Community Church
- High priority
- Medium priority
- Low priority

Would you like to highlight any areas of Kerith Community Church where we could improve our racial inclusion?

(open box)

Going forward

In order to learn more about systemic racism I would be willing to
- Attend a short course online or in person.
- Participate in a small group about these issues.
- Join a task force issue.
- Attend an educational training.
- None of the above.
- Other

Please share any further thoughts or ideas you have about the Kerith Community Church's efforts to address systemic racism in our culture.

If you would like to share personal experiences of systemic racism but would prefer to do so privately with pastoral staff, please reach out to talkingaboutrace@kerith.church

(Open- box)