

I am Reverend Canon Dr. Jacob Devadason, bearing multiple identities, including Indian, Dalit, Christian, British Asian, and ordained clergy in the Church of England. The social and cultural landscape in most Western nations is undergoing expansion due to increased social mobility and immigration. Consequently, one's identity becomes an essential imperative in life. My origins trace back to a small Dalit village in rural Tamil Nadu, South India. My parents were teachers in Church of South India Mission schools, my father also served as a lay reader (catechist) for 50 years in the Tirunelveli Diocese. I am married to Jasmine, who holds degrees in theology, including a PhD, and is an ordained priest in the Church of England. Together, we have two sons, Jachin and Jonathan. Our family's journey has overcome formidable challenges to achieve what we are, is a testimony to divine assistance.

At the age of 18, I had a personal conversion experience. This transformative encounter led me to pursue missionary work. Consequently, I enrolled in a Bible College at Chennai (Madras) in 1980. In a few days after graduating in April 1984, I was sent by a missionary organisation to serve as a church planting missionary in Kolkata (Calcutta) with only 65 rupees (less than a pound) for my travel money I reached Kolkata. I faced the challenges of homelessness and language barriers, as I could only speak Tamil and English. Through connections with rickshaw pullers and street vendors, I quickly learned Hindi and Bengali. Carrying a 'Harmonium' on my bicycle carrier, I became a 'street evangelist,' engaging in activities such as playing music and singing Hindi and Bengali songs, establishing 'House Groups,' and 'Bible Clubs for Kids.'

My ministry in Kolkata resulted in the establishment of 15 churches. In 1988, I founded the Calcutta Bible Seminary, aimed at training Bengali leaders for pastoral ministry. Over the years, it has grown to become a premier theological institute in Kolkata. During my eight-years stay in Kolkata, I also worked extensively among Bangladeshi refugees, Tamil migrants in slum areas, and homeless families and individuals. In 2015, I was invited back to the seminary I founded to deliver a talk on the 'Call to mission and Serving the God of Mission in Obedience'. The presentation highlighted how my simple faith and obedience contributed to the establishment of churches and a thriving Bible College.

My overarching goal in every community I engage with is to foster and fortify the simple faith in God, enhancing both the internal and external dimensions of congregational faith and action. I am deeply committed to building strong relationships with other faith communities, engaged in dialogues; a commitment that underscores my belief in promoting unity and understanding among diverse religious communities / traditions.

As a devout, prayerful, and mission minded individual, I embody my faith, guided by the Holy Spirit. Despite my extensive theological knowledge, reflected in my qualifications, I prefer to deliver teachings and preaching in a biblical yet accessible manner. My passion for evangelism is evident not only through church planting initiatives in India but also in the substantial growth experienced by congregations under my guidance in this country. I am not ashamed in proclaiming the Gospel in a manner easily comprehensible to all.

Prior to my ordination, I served as the National Coordinator for the Dalit Solidarity Network based at Christian Aid in London. Subsequently, I worked as the Chaplain to international students at various universities, including MU, MMU, UMIST, and the RNCM in Manchester.

My collaboration with colleagues and interfaith friends resulted in the transformation of St. Peter's Ecumenical Chaplaincy into an Ecumenical/Interfaith Chaplaincy, where I also served as an interfaith adviser to higher educational institutions.

My urban experience in economically deprived, socially and racially diverse areas of Manchester, such as Clayton, Wythenshawe, and West Croydon in South London, has been enriching. My ministry thrived in such contexts. I feel that my vocation and ministry are deeply rooted in prayer, dedicated to serving God rather than fulfilling personal ambitions. Beyond my parish ministry, I have assumed responsibilities in the Church concerning BAME, racial, and social justice issues. Notably, I have been a member of the BAME church leaders' group since 2006 and served on various diocesan committees and synods in Manchester, Southwark, and Chester Dioceses.

From 2013 to 2018, I served as the Bishop of Croydon's adviser on interfaith issues while holding the position of priest in charge at Christ Church, West Croydon. Subsequently, I relocated to the Cheshire Diocese, Heald Green, and currently serve as a volunteer chaplain at St Ann's Hospice, Heald Green. In the Chester Diocese, I am a member of the Race Relations Committee and serve as the Interfaith Adviser to the Bishop of Chester. Actively engaged in the community, I chair the South Asian Tamil Christian Fellowship in Manchester

I pursued theological education at various esteemed institutions in India and abroad, obtaining a Bachelor of Theology and Bachelor of Divinity. Subsequently, I pursued advanced studies, earning a Master of Theology, a Master of Arts, and a Ph.D. focused on 'Theology of Dalitism' from The Manchester University. Additionally, I engaged in Ecumenical Theological Education at Queen's Foundation & The College of Ascension, Birmingham, UK. My passion for addressing the plight of the Dalits in India is evident in my written work, including a book on Dalit theology stemming from my Ph.D. research on the subject.

Recognizing the complexity of issues influencing our Church, I firmly believe that these challenges are not diversions from the genuine work that God is undertaking. Transformation, I contend, commences when we confront these intricate issues as the actual work where the Spirit of God is revitalizing life. Numerous significant social, political, ecological, and ecclesiological matters impact congregational life today, often concealed beneath the surface and contributing to the shaping of our Church culture in ways that may go unnoticed. It is imperative that we address these issues with fidelity, prayerfulness, transparency, and love to propel the Church into more wholesome, just, and compassionate forms of communal life. My commitment is resolute in maintaining justice and unity within the Church, recognising them as crucial elements for the overall effectiveness of the Church's mission to bring the Gospel of Christ to all people.

Dear brothers and sisters, I seek your prayerful support and request your vote for my election to the General Synod. My aim is not to alter the culture or proceedings of the Synod but to stand in solidarity with fellow brothers and sisters of the General Synod, advocating for justice and unity. If necessary, I pledge to lend my voice to these vital causes, fostering a Church that embodies these principles in its mission and communal life.