



Center for Faith, Justice, and Reconciliation
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Faith-Based Racial Reconciliation Organization Names New President

Center for Faith, Justice and Reconciliation will be led by Dr. Sabrina E. Dent

RICHMOND, Va. – The Center for Faith, Justice, and Reconciliation (CFJR) has named Dr. Sabrina E. Dent, an experienced advocate for justice and national leader for religious freedom, as its new president. Dent will lead the Richmond-based educational organization and theological think tank dedicated to building beloved community by promoting justice, systemic change in congregations and communities, and reconciliation of people and creation.

A lifelong advocate for advancing human rights and social justice, Dent brings a passion for religious liberty and advocacy, and deep experience engaging with faith communities to the Center.

The Center’s founding president and Wake Forest Professor of the Humanities at Wake Forest University, Dr. Corey D. B. Walker, said, “In this challenging moment, I cannot think of a more dedicated, committed, and gifted leader for the Center than Sabrina. She is not only a dear friend and admired colleague, but she is also a fearless advocate with a broad and inclusive vision of justice that will truly enable the Center to reach its highest aspirations.”

Noted Baptist historian and Founding Dean and Professor of Divinity Emeritus of the Wake Forest University School of Divinity Dr. Bill J. Leonard is chair of the CFJR Board of Directors. Leonard said, “The Center welcomes Sabrina Dent’s leadership at such a critical time for defending and pursuing religious liberty in the United States. Her insightful and extensive engagement with educational, ecumenical, interfaith and interracial communities will extend and enhance the Center’s commitment to faith, justice and reconciliation in multiple contexts.”

“Even as Center operations have been restricted by the global pandemic, the Center has sharpened its focus on religious freedom,” Walker added. “With Sabrina’s creative leadership, collaborative style, and faithful commitment, the Center can leverage new opportunities to develop innovative programming that engages academic, faith and advocacy communities in advancing this important work.”

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A Theological Think Tank for Building Beloved Community

Dent's focus on religious freedom was honed early on when she served as a BJC Fellow at the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty. BJC Executive Director Amanda Tyler praised Dent as "a dynamic and visionary leader, as well as a passionate and effective advocate for racial justice and religious freedom. I'm delighted that she is bringing her experience and expertise to the Center for Faith, Justice, and Reconciliation at this critical time."

Founding director of the Religious Freedom Center of the Freedom Forum Charles C. Hanyes said, "Dr. Sabrina Dent is a true servant leader with a special gift for bringing people together across deep differences. Her profound faith, passion for justice, and compassion for others make Dr. Dent the ideal choice to serve as President of the Center for Faith, Justice, and Reconciliation."

In 2021, Dent was named one of [21 Faith Leaders to Watch](#) by the Center for American Progress (CAP).

"Dent has long been an incredible thought leader on the intersections of faith in public life, religious freedom, and racial justice," CAP director Maggie Siddiqi said. "Her scholarship is unique because of how she puts it into practice – through deep relationships with diverse community leaders across the country. She plays a connective role between academics, public policy experts, faith leaders, educators, and more, enabling her work to be transformative for all involved. I'm excited for this next chapter for the Center for Faith, Justice, and Reconciliation under her leadership!"

A much sought-after speaker, Dent will be a featured speaker for the First Amendment Museum in Maine's "First Amendment Speaker Series" on January 20, 2022 and will moderate the Center's National Religious Freedom Day program, "All Faiths and None: Reimagining Religious Freedom in the 21st Century," featuring Dr. Keisha E. McKenzie, Senior Vice President of Programs at Auburn Seminary, Elizabeth Reiner Platt, Director, The Law, Rights, and Religion Project at Columbia University Law School, and Tahil Sharma, Regional Coordinator for North America, United Religions Initiative. The event will take place on Monday, January 17, 2022 at 3:00pm ET via Zoom.

Dent comes to the CFJR presidency with a distinguished professional career that includes serving as director of programs and partnerships for the Religious Freedom Center of the Freedom Forum and senior faith adviser for Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Dent is known for her signature ability of highlighting issues of people of color, women, religious minorities, and LGBTQ+ people in promoting religious freedom for all and has lectured at universities, seminaries, and conferences across the nation.

Dent is editor and contributing author of the book, *African Americans and Religious Freedom: New Perspectives for Congregations and Communities*, and is currently working on a children's book on religious freedom. She recently convened a national conference on "Reimagining Religious Freedom" with Vanderbilt Divinity School's Public Theology and Racial Justice Collaborative, in partnership with the Center for Faith, Justice, and Reconciliation, the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, KARAMAH: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights, the Center for Public Theology at Wesley Theological Seminary, and the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference.

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A native of Petersburg, VA, Dent received her bachelor's degree from Virginia Tech, Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees at the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, and co-hosts the [Sister Act Podcast](#) of the American Muslim Institution.

About the Center for Faith, Justice, and Reconciliation

Founded in November 2020 and based on the campus of Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, the Center for Faith, Justice, and Reconciliation is an ecumenical think tank and educational resource that carries on the tradition of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond of gender inclusivity, racial diversity and ecumenical commitment. Baptist in heritage, Christian in tradition, interfaith in outlook, and holistic in vision, the Center is an independent 501(c)(3) educational organization.

For more information, visit www.faithandjusticerva.com.

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