



The Archbishop of York spoke today in the General Synod debate (GS 2338) on Racial Justice: Furthering the implementation of 'From Lament to Action'.

His speech follows in full:

So Synod, I want to suggest that there is an emerging theme to these sessions which is about looking, non-anxiously, without fear to the future.

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The Archbishop of Canterbury challenged us deeply in his Presidential Address to not be fearful, to be bold and courageous in meeting the challenges we face. Yesterday we had a hard but a profound conversation lamenting the past but looking to the future of our safeguarding work. Today we discuss Racial Justice. Tomorrow we think about how we move forward into the future in our response to the church's involvement in chattel slavery. All this requires us to be honest about the terrible failings of the past, not to flinch from the failings and the challenges of the present; and to build a better future for everyone.

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I want to pay tribute to those who continue to lead us and to stir us up over issues on racial justice. There are too many names to mention but you have taught me so much. We know our legacy in this work is not good; we have not responded as we should. But we are emboldened to do better. Racial Justice is about Justice. It is about the dignity, place and belonging of all of us. It is about living as part of the kingdom of God.□

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Synod, we must be clear:□this is a journey for us all. Racial justice is everybody's business, because it is an issue about how we follow Jesus. It is about who we are in Christ, how we follow Jesus and how we commend his life and his grace to others. Or if we turn from this, it is how we get in people's way. Prevent them coming to Christ by our lack of racial justice. Count them out.

I welcome this report and this call for continued and purposeful action. So let me make some specific observations.

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Firstly the work of racial justice, like safeguarding, is the work of the whole church – this isn't just the concern of a few people, not just the concern of our GMH and UKME communities. It is how we are the body of Christ and who we are.

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I believe there is real value in having an independent body, as the Racial Justice Commission has done, enabling us to help set out a compelling agenda for racial justice and racial change in the Church.□

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We need to lean in and support the work of the Racial Justice Directorate to ensure delivery, monitoring, and accountability for racial justice actions, centrally and across all dioceses, to provide not just a theory of change but an engine of change, reversing the Church of England's track

record of inaction.□

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We need further research so as to understand what strategies and policies work and what don't and to engage with stakeholders across and beyond the church.

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It is encouraging that racial justice groups have been commissioned in the Dioceses, I was in Blackburn recently to set one up and we have a group in York. But we must not be complacent and there is more we can do. I have been a member of CMEAC for many years and this does need to move forward to help monitor actions and outcomes on racial justice.

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Brothers and Sisters, I want action, but in this issue as with others, I continue to lament. Our track record isn't good. But I pay tribute to the work of those who have got us here, there is not the time to mention names but we do need to thank Lord Boateng. Paul, you have been the best friend to us, you have told us how it is. Thank you for your tenacious witness, we want to do better and we ask that you keep working with us.

I urge you to support this motion that seeks to ensure that we keep moving in the right direction. We believe in the catholic Church, a universal church. But we are not universal. Not while racism and discrimination rupture our body. Not while such inequalities persist. Not while those of us who happen to be white think we're normal. Not while we fail to embrace the beautiful diverse vision given us in scripture, the Pentecostal and eschatological vision of a church which is every tongue and every nation. May the Lord have mercy upon us and may the Spirit which enabled the Church to speak in every language make us a church of England, a church for all this nation and a church□for everyone of its children.

To watch the [live stream of General Synod here](#)

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