



Archbishops' statement in response to Anti-Racism Taskforce Report

Thursday 22 April 2021



Racism is a sin. Of this, we have no doubt. Anything which diminishes the value and beauty of each individual person, made in the image of God, is sinful. There is no place for it in the world, and we are determined to make sure there is no room for it in the Church.

But it is here. We have seen, time and time again, people being bullied, overlooked, undermined and excluded from the life of the Church, from the family of God. It breaks our hearts, and we are truly sorry.

We welcome this report from the Anti-Racism Taskforce, which we commissioned last year to help us understand what progress we might have made towards tackling racism in the Church of England. Having scrutinised reports and recommendations from the last 35 years, the Taskforce have identified many things which must change; things which have been called for before and have not been done.

We hope we will be the generation to halt this cycle of inaction. We pray for the wisdom, courage and grace to be leaders who will bring real change.

Today, we receive all these recommendations and welcome the Taskforce's challenge. We commit to work with colleagues to implement five of their recommendations immediately:

1. Work with General Synod to encourage them to co-opt ten ethnic minority candidates, of which five will be clergy and five lay people, to serve as members of the General Synod for the 2021- 2026 Quinquennium. As co-optees, they would serve with full participation and voting rights.
2. Invite ethnic minority clergy observers to attend House of Bishops as participant observers for three-year periods until such time as there are six bishops from ethnic minorities able to sit as members of the House. The process should mirror that used for election of women as participant observers in 2013.
3. Establish a Racial Justice Commission, which we have written to invite the Reverend Dr Joel Edwards to chair. Further details on its composition and work will be made available when finalised. This group will direct their attention to the working practices of the Church of England with regard to racial justice, and will hold the two of us to account for our leadership in this regard.
4. Work with Archbishops Council to create a Racial Justice Directorate within the National Church Institutions of the Church of England, for a five-year period, to implement the recommendations of the Taskforce and the Commission.
5. Work with Archbishops Council to replace the Committee for Minority Ethnic Concerns (CMEAC) with a new standing committee of the Archbishops' Council to oversee the work of the Racial Justice Directorate.

We welcome the prayers, goodwill and cooperation of everyone willing to work with us to make this happen, by the Grace of God.

The Most Reverend & Right Honourable Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury

The Most Reverend & Right Honourable Stephen Cottrell
Archbishop of York

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