

The Church Commissioners for England has learned from research it commissioned that Queen Anne's Bounty, a predecessor fund of the Church Commissioners' £10.1 billion endowment, had links with transatlantic chattel slavery. The Church Commissioners is deeply sorry for its predecessor fund's links with transatlantic chattel slavery.

In the 18th century, Queen Anne's Bounty invested significant amounts of its funds in the South Sea Company, a company that traded in enslaved people. It also received numerous benefactions, many of which are likely to have come from individuals linked to, or who profited from, transatlantic chattel slavery or the plantation economy.

The Church Commissioners in 2019 decided to conduct research into the source of its endowment fund to gain an improved understanding of its history. It worked with forensic accountants to review early ledgers and other original source documents from Queen Anne's Bounty. That research is now complete, and a final report of the findings will be published later this year. The Church Commissioners is forming a group to consider the research and how to respond to these findings. Further information will be shared in due course.

The Bishop of Birmingham, the Right Reverend David Urquhart, a member of the Church Commissioners Board and chair of the group that had oversight of the research, said:

The Church Commissioners is deeply sorry for its predecessor fund's links with transatlantic chattel slavery. The Church Commissioners aims to be transparent about its history and we will use this knowledge to ensure we are at the forefront of responsible investment globally. Alongside this work to consider our past, we continue to lobby for change in the companies in which we invest today and call for those companies to champion human rights within their supply chains. Through our policy of advocating 'respect for people', we aim to create a fairer world today in which all of God's children can flourish.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Justin Welby, who is also Chair of the Church Commissioners, said:

I am deeply sorry for the links with transatlantic chattel slavery that the Church Commissioners has identified. This abominable trade took men, women and children created in God's image and stripped them of their dignity and freedom. The fact that some within the Church actively supported and profited from it is a source of shame. It is only by facing this painful reality that we can take steps towards genuine healing and reconciliation – the path that Jesus Christ calls us to walk. This is a moment for lament, repentance and restorative action. I pray for those affected by this news and hope that we may work together to discern a new way forward.

More information

- [Read further information and the interim report](#)

Notes to editors:

The Church Commissioners manage a Â£10.1 billion endowment to support the mission and ministry of the Church of England. The Church Commissioners was formed in 1948 by merging two bodies, Queen Anne's Bounty and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Queen Anne's Bounty was set up in 1704 with the aim of tackling the poverty amongst Church of England clergy.

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