



The Church of England still has a ‘considerable distance’ to cover before it achieves racial justice, the Archbishop of York has told a gathering of more than 100 lay ministers and clergy at a conference today.

The Being Built Together Conference, hosted by the Church of England’s Racial Justice Unit, will inspire work towards a church that “fully represents all God’s people,” Archbishop Stephen said.

“We find ourselves on a profound path in our endeavours to build a church that fosters equal participation, and by God’s grace, we are closer to achieving that than ever before,” he said in a video message to the conference.

“And yet we must acknowledge that there is still a considerable distance to cover.”

More than 130 clergy and lay ministers from Global Majority Heritage backgrounds gathered for the first time for five years at the two-day conference in the Hayes Conference centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire.

The Church of England’s Racial Justice Director, Rev Guy Hewitt, addressing the conference, urged those attending to become ‘bolder and stronger’ in working together towards racial justice.

“Our commitment as a church to racial justice isn’t simply because of demographic trends or that it is socially responsible in the pursuit of equality, diversity or inclusion, both of which are commendable goals,” he said.

“But rather we choose to stand against the evil and pernicious sin of racism. Our racial justice mandate does not flow from any identity politics, but from our identity in Christ in terms of reflecting the Imago Dei and being truly united in him as brothers and sisters in Christ.”

The conference heard from the Rev Canon Dr Chigor Chike, and Rev Sonia Barron, members of the [Archbishops' Racial Justice Commission](#).

Rev Sonia Barron said the conference was providing a space for people of Global Majority Heritage to worship and share stories.

“My prayer is that we will leave here and set up smaller groups in dioceses to support each other and encourage one another,” she said.

Dr Chike told the conference that they were united in combating the ‘lie’ and ‘false narrative’ of racism.

Other speakers due to address the conference include representatives from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Friendly Churches, the Zimbabwe National Anglican Fellowship and ordinands and curates from Global Majority heritage backgrounds.

Several bishops from Global Majority Heritage backgrounds are due to attend the conference including The Bishop of Huddersfield Smitha Prasad and The Bishop of Willesden, Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy.