

## Recommendations will shape new Fund for Healing, Repair & Justice

The Board of Governors of the Church Commissioners has warmly welcomed the report of the independent Oversight Group, the recommendations from which will shape the new Fund for Healing, Repair and Justice. The Oversight Group were tasked with advising on the Church Commissioners' response to its historic links with African chattel enslavement.

"In seeking justice for all, we must continue to work together remembering that all are created in the image of God," said the Most Reverend Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury and Chair of the Board of Governors. "The Oversight Group's independent work with the Church Commissioners is the beginning of a multi-generational response to the appalling evil of Transatlantic chattel enslavement. My prayer is that this work will stimulate further visionary and practical co-created action."

The Church Commissioners particularly welcomed the clear-sighted ambition of the Group and its hope for the scale and impact for the Fund for Healing, Repair and Justice. Acknowledging suggestions around more wide-ranging research and truth-telling must be taken as seriously as the financial ambitions reflected in the recommendations.

The recommendations of the Oversight Group were informed by people from all over the world, who responded to surveys or attended focus groups. The Church Commissioners wishes to express its thanks for the Oversight Group's dedicated work to involve impacted communities at this early stage and the challenge the Group has provided, and accepts the need for continued extensive work with impacted communities as part of the ongoing programme encompassed in the recommendations.

## Full press release from the independent Oversight Group

### Independent Oversight Group launches recommendations to Church Commissioners to address legacy of African chattel enslavement

#### Church of England's investment arm accepts the report in full

Following its appointment last year by the Church Commissioners of England, an independent Oversight Group is today releasing its report and recommendations into how the body should implement a new impact investment fund. The Fund and grant-funding programme are being set up as part of the Church Commissioners' journey to heal and repair the damage caused by the legacy of African chattel enslavement.

The recommendations include:

- Recognition that £100m initially earmarked by the Church Commissioners is not enough, relative to the scale of the Church Commissioners' endowment or of the moral sin and crime of African chattel enslavement, and that the organisation, in partnership with others, should target an initiative of £1bn and above
- That the timeline for the delivery of the fund should be accelerated and delivered faster than the nine years originally envisaged
- A call for the Church of England to fully acknowledge and apologise for the harms caused by its historic denial—that Black Africans are created in the image of God, for its deliberate actions to destroy diverse African religious belief systems and to facilitate work that builds the spiritual connection of Africa and the African diaspora with the Gospel and the diverse spiritual practices of African forebears

The Oversight Group is recommending that the new impact investment fund be called the **Fund for Healing, Repair and Justice**. Following consultation with members of the global African diaspora, the recommendations call on the Church Commissioners to use this Fund to invest in Black-led businesses focusing on education, economic empowerment, health outcomes and improving access to land and food as well as provide grants to address these and other issues brought up for communities impacted by the legacies of African chattel enslavement.

The report says: "Crimes against humanity rooted in African chattel enslavement have caused damage so vast it will require patient effort spanning generations to address. But we can start today, in small and large ways."

The report and recommendations were drafted by a Black-led Oversight Group, which had a majority of members from the impacted communities, using consultation and research conducted with the global African diaspora, to ensure the voices of those affected by African chattel enslavement were central to the process and the final recommendations.

The Right Reverend Dr Rosemarie Mallett, Bishop of Croydon, Chair of the Oversight Group said: “No amount of money can fully atone for or fully redress the centuries long impact of African chattel enslavement, the effects of which are still felt around the world today. But implementing the recommendations will show the commitment of the Church Commissioners to supporting the process of healing, repair and justice for all of those across society impacted by the legacy of African chattel enslavement.”

The Oversight Group has also recommended that the programme should be ultimately owned and run by Black communities. The aspiration is for the impact investment and spending programme to start operating later in 2024.

Bishop Rosemarie continued: “This work and the Fund matter because the legacy of African enslavement continues to have a significant impact on communities today and inequalities persist till this day. The impact is measurable and apparent in everything from pregnancy and childbirth outcomes to life chances at birth, physical and mental health, education, employment, income, property, and the criminal justice system. We hope this initiative is just the start and is a catalyst to encourage other institutions to investigate their past and make a better future for impacted communities.”

Another recommendation calls on the Church Commissioners and Church of England to conduct further research into how else they were enriched by their involvement in African chattel enslavement.

The Church Commissioners, which manages the Church of England’s investment arm, has welcomed and accepted the report in full while acknowledging that no amount of money can make up for the past, it had to be done. The Fund is an essential act for the Church of England, on theological and humanitarian grounds. The setting up of the Fund is the most significant act of acknowledgement and repair yet made by any UK institution that was in receipt of funds earned through the enslavement of African people and their descendants.

“In seeking justice for all, we must continue to work together remembering that all are created in the image of God,” said The Most Reverend Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury. “The Oversight Group’s independent work with the Church Commissioners is the beginning of a multi-generational response to the appalling evil of Transatlantic chattel enslavement. My prayer is that this work will stimulate further visionary and practical co-created action.”

The full report and recommendations can be viewed at [hrjfund.org](https://www.hrjfund.org).

- [Church Commissioners for England - Oversight Group Report to the Board](#) (212.7 KB)
- [Church Commissioners for England - Oversight Group Questionnaire Report](#) (468.59 KB)