



The Revd Marcus Walker  
Chair, Save the Parish

The Rt Revd Prof David Walker  
Deputy Chair,  
Church Commissioners

16 January 2023

Dear Marcus,

Thank you for your letter to Archbishop Justin, commenting on the Church Commissioners' response to the recent report on historic links to transatlantic chattel slavery, and also commenting on other matters concerning funding for the mission of the Church.

I join you in thanking God that the stain on history that was chattel slavery has ostensibly ended, although modern slavery remains a huge issue worldwide (involving many scores of millions of people) and one that the Church of England's National Investing Bodies are committed to highlighting and combatting through our responsible investment work. There is no doubt, however, that there is a direct link between the legacy of chattel slavery and health and education outcomes; financial insecurity; reduced access to opportunity and the blight of discrimination for many. Sadly, it cannot be said that the stain has yet begun to fade.

I trust that you will have read our full research report and press release relating to our response, and as such will know that categorising the new funding commitment as 'reparations' is inaccurate and misleading. It would not be possible, either practically or morally, to allocate any amount of funding to repair the damage caused by the generations of human misery inflicted through the transatlantic chattel slave trade.

However, having come to a full understanding of the extent of the involvement of Queen Anne's Bounty in investing in the slave trade through research and forensic analysis, the Church Commissioners are clear that we must take responsibility for this involvement, apologise for past wrongs, and now seek to invest in a better future for us all. That is our hope and our intent through the funding commitment we announced on 10<sup>th</sup> January.

I noted your comments on numbers of new disciples as detailed in the recent report led by Sir Robert Chote, and I rejoice that there are new people coming to know Jesus through the inspiring work done in churches throughout this country. I hope you will share with me the belief that visibly demonstrating that the Church is for all will demonstrate the Church's commitment to justice to more people across our nation. Such action and attitudes should reflect the commitment of the Church of England to reflecting in deed as well as word its commitment to witnessing to the character and love of God and its sharing in the global life of the one universal church.

We can do this through taking responsibility for past involvement in the degradation of fellow humans - the need for us to do this is critical to many from communities who have not previously seen us do this in a way that is meaningful to them. We cannot hold onto money gained so wrongly any more than a burglar can hang on to profits from their activity. You will be aware of the many reviews and studies which show that the Church is not always seen as a safe and inclusive space for UKME worshippers.

That everyone is welcome in his Church is something that Jesus was at pains to point out. St Paul both emphasises the inclusion of all peoples (Colossians 3:11) and condemns the marginalisation of any class (I Corinthians 10). I pray that all those who minister in our churches will support the work to ensure that our current failings on this are visibly addressed.

As you will know from your close reading of the Chote report, both Lowest Income Communities Funding and Strategic Development Funding were identified as essential for supporting and growing the ministry of many parishes.

I am delighted that the Church Commissioners have been able to commit a 30% increase in funding for the Church in this new triennium – in total £1.2 billion over 2023-25. While improvements will continue to be made to these funding streams to ensure they have the most impact possible, we must also acknowledge that the pandemic disrupted many mission projects and, in respect of the numbers of new disciples created, we should bear in mind Sir Robert's counsel to allow projects time to achieve their desired outcomes and for the full impact of funding to become clear.

As we start a new year and celebrate the Epiphany, I am hopeful that you will join with me in acknowledging this opportunity for the Church to take action in seeking to create a better, fairer future for all, in accord with the words of I John 3:18, which exhorts us to 'not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth,' and in all our work, 'fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith' (Hebrews 12:2). You comment that where our treasure is so will our heart be also, which was preceded by Jesus' words to store up treasure in heaven by good deeds. This action is a beginning of such storing.

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Walker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Walker

Bishop of Manchester

Deputy Chair, Church Commissioners for England