

The guilt of Justin Welby



The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby

An independent review, called the Kevin Makin Review, into sexual and physical abuse in the Church of England, was published on 7th November 2024.

The Review was into allegations of grievous abuse on boys committed by John Smyth, a worship leader in the Church of England.

The Review found that as many as 130 boys were groomed and abused by Smyth at Christian summer camps over a period of nearly 40 years.

The despicable abuse was sexual but also included sado-masochistic lashings with a cane as a form of corporal punishment.

The mistreatment spanned a period of time from the 1970's through to Smyth's death in 2018.

Between 1984 and his death, Smyth lived in Zimbabwe and South Africa.

On 21st March 2013, Justin Welby was installed as the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is the leader of the Church of England and head of the global Anglican Communion (approx 85 million members worldwide).

Crucially, five months after being appointed, Justin Welby was personally informed in August 2013 about the Smyth abuse allegations.

Astonishingly he did not inform the Police, and the very serious allegations were not revealed until a Channel 4 TV documentary in 2017 and subsequent investigation by Hampshire Police.

In other words, for nearly 4 years between 2013 and 2017, Smyth was free to continue to harm boys in Zimbabwe and South Africa. This was due to the authorities in those countries being completely unaware of the allegations because Justin Welby and the leadership of the Church of England had failed to inform them.

A key finding of the Makin Review states (at para 14.1.1 (e)), *"The conclusion that must be reached is that John Smyth could and should have been reported to the Police in 2013. This could (and probably would) have led to a full investigation, the uncovering of the truth of the serial nature of the abuses in the UK, involving multiple victims and the possibility of a conviction being brought against him. In effect, 3 ½ years was lost, a time within which John Smyth could have been brought to justice and any abuse he was committing in South Africa discovered and stopped"*.

However, Justin Welby has defiantly refused to resign, saying on Thursday 7th November 2024, *"I accept that from August 2013 until your programme uncovered this in a documentary in 2017, that I did not, and I take responsibility for this and it was a failure and a really shaming failure, I did not ensure that this was pursued as energetically, as remorselessly as it should have been"*.

Justin Welby continued by stating, *"I have given it (resigning) a lot of thought, I have taken advice as recently as this morning from senior colleagues. And no, I'm not going to resign for this"*.

Unsurprisingly, many people including some of the boys who survived the horrific abuse, are calling for Justin Welby to resign immediately.

We unhesitatingly regard the failure to notify the Police and authorities in 2013 as a deplorable and cowardly cover up by Justin Welby and the Church of England. A shocking omission that led to the continued, but entirely preventable, sexual and physical exploitation of young children for a period of several years.

Accordingly, we have joined the chorus for justice calling for Justin Welby to quit, by today writing an urgent letter directly to him.

If Smyth was still alive to be prosecuted in Court, would Justin Welby be guilty as an accessory to a paedophile's crimes?

See link below to our open correspondence.

<https://www.ik.im/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/12.11.24-Letter-to-Reverend-Justin-Welby-Archbishop-of-Canterbury.pdf>