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those of other faiths.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has warned against cultural imperialism and called for Christians to be sensitive and seek genuine dialogue when witnessing to those of other faiths.

Delivering the annual Deo Gloria Lecture, hosted by the London School of Theology at Lambeth Palace on Wednesday evening, the Archbishop warned against making evangelism a product in a marketplace or an expression of cultural superiority.

In the lecture, titled 'Good news for everyone? Evangelism and other faiths', he said: 'We need to be ready: ready to speak, to share. This is hope for the world! But let that witness be seasoned with gentleness and respect.'

The Archbishop highlighted several challenges with evangelism in the context of religious diversity.

First, he called on Christians to tell people about Jesus without demeaning the other person's faith.

'Let us never be guilty of demeaning the light that others have, just show them something of the light you know,' he said. 'Let's tell people about Jesus and witness to what he has done for us, without feeling the need to presume to tell others what is wrong with their faith.'

Archbishop Justin's second challenge was for Christians to truly listen to the person of another faith. 'Let's be honest. How much of our evangelism is monologuing?' he asked. 'Any credible witness requires us to be in dialogue with the other.'

He also said many white British Christians need to be conscious of their colonial history and how it has impacted other faiths in Britain today.

'How are British Christians heard when we talk of the claims of Christ by diaspora communities who have experienced abuse and exploitation by an empire that has seemed to hold the Christian story at the heart of its project?'

The Archbishop's fourth challenge was for Christians to be ready to learn and receive from someone of another faith. 'We are not contradicting any of the claims we make about the centrality of Jesus Christ to the whole of creation, our commitment to him as the source of all salvation, by recognising that other traditions offer people encouragement, community and even deep wells of spirituality,' he said. 'But we may find our understanding challenged and enriched.'

Archbishop Justin's final challenge was to highlight that evangelism is about relationship and love, not about building a power base or ensuring the survival of the Church. '

'This is why so many religious groups rightly complain of being 'targeted' by Christians,' the Archbishop said. 'It's one thing to feel a calling to share your lives with a particular culture or people. It's another thing altogether to see their value only as would-be Christians.'

'How do we express our love for others in witness so that they understand that we care for them even if they make no decision to follow Christ?'

Read the full text of the Archbishop's lecture

3 min read

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