ANDREW MARR:
Alright it’s nearly six years since the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, surprised me and everybody watching this show by removing and then cutting up his dog collar during an interview about Zimbabwe. He said that the country’s leader, Robert Mugabe, was destroying the identity of its people with his repressive policies and the Archbishop vowed to remain collarless until Mugabe was removed. Well that gesture made headlines around the world, but President Mugabe has proved remarkably resilient. He’s now aged 89 and in power for more than thirty years. He’s just won another five year term in office following Zimbabwe’s recent elections. So Dr Sentamu, who’s with me now, is still without his dog collar, as you can see. It must have been quite a shock to see how long Mugabe has survived given the feeling of international crisis when we first spoke?

DR SENTAMU:
Yes it was surprising because in 2008 it was quite clear that he had lost the election, and then there was this cobbled up question of power sharing. And whenever that happens, the non-ruling party always loses, and this is what has happened this time.

ANDREW MARR:
Except in this time, except this time. And in the recent elections there’s been a lot of criticism …

DR SENTAMU:
Yes.

ANDREW MARR:
… but the overwhelming vote for Mugabe suggests that he’s going to be there for as long as he wants.

DR SENTAMU:
Well I mean the matter is now in the courts in Zimbabwe because about a million people are alleged not to have actually been allowed to vote; that people were on the list, not properly published; and the Government, actually Botswana has said the election was not free and fair. And Botswana is one of the most stable neighbours and I want to take comfort from the fact that at least Botswana, unlike the others, are not singing to the tune that Mugabe is actually singing??

ANDREW MARR:
So there’s some resistance. Can I ask you …

DR SENTAMU:
Yes.

ANDREW MARR:
… for a Christian response to the whole question of a just war in Syria, in particular, because that’s what everybody’s arguing about …

DR SENTAMU:
Yes, yes.

ANDREW MARR:
… the notion that you can have a surgical strike using a tomahawk, the notion that
you can actually stop a regime gasing its own people. There’s been a lot of moral opposition to the idea of a war, but presumably there’s also a lot of immorality sometimes in not fighting? Can you give us a Christian analysis of the situation?

DR SENTAMU:
Well I think Christians on this are divided, but my position in terms of a just war theory is that whenever there is war, it’s a sign of sin and the broken relationships in people and war always creates evil. But sometimes not to go to war actually …

ANDREW MARR:
Creates greater evil.

DR SENTAMU:
… greater evil.

ANDREW MARR:
I think there used to be eight million Christians I think in Syria …

DR SENTAMU:
Yes, yes.

ANDREW MARR:
… and it’s now down to half a million?

DR SENTAMU:
Yes, half a million. But I think the issue is not just the Christians; it’s actually what’s happening to the Syrian people. So the six principles of the just war theory have got to be justified. First of all, is it a just cause? Is it reasonably likely to succeed? Is it going to be proportionate in the end? Is there the just authority to carry it out? Are we going to be certain that actually in the end it’s going to lead to the solution people think they’re going to get?

ANDREW MARR:
And having totted your way through those, which verdict do you come on in terms of Syria?
DR SENTAMU:
I think in terms of Syria, taken on its own merits, I don’t think it’s wise to go to war because, as you know, chemical weapons can be moved very quickly, very fast. So you strike one particular target. We still don’t know who did it and I would have thought we shouldn’t do what happened to Hans Blix, who during the Iraq question, hadn’t finished the actual inspection and then a war started.

ANDREW MARR:
Yes.

DR SENTAMU:
So these inspectors have got about (they say) three weeks to report back. And unfortunately they haven’t given the mandate to determine who did it; and until we know what kind of chemical weapon was used, how many people died, and who really gave the authority to go ahead with it, to just suddenly bomb out of anger, out of irritation - and the pictures are dreadful - I don’t think that’s always justified.

ANDREW MARR:
Great. Can I ask a little bit about campaigns nearer to home …

DR SENTAMU:
Yes.

ANDREW MARR:
… because you’re leading the campaign for a living wage, which is not the same as the minimum wage. Can you explain to those who don’t know the difference and why you feel so strongly about it?

DR SENTAMU:
The minimum wage was introduced, which was a good thing, and the professor who was in charge of it, George Bain, now says really if it had been kept up people would now be earning about £19 an hour, not what it is at the moment, because the pay has
been static …

**ANDREW MARR:**

*(over)* It’s been frozen all that time.

**DR SENTAMU:**

… and also inflation has actually …..?? And the five million people who are low wage earners have not actually been well treated in the end, so it seems to me that when the Government is putting in £4 billion to top up people’s incomes, the best thing is to actually make sure that people are getting a living wage. And that’s what it’s about. That’s the commission I’m chairing. It reports the best way of doing it. And the trouble is in this country, the income disparity between those who are earning very low and those who are earning high is so vast; and whenever there is an unfair income, I’m afraid society is never at peace with itself.

**ANDREW MARR:**

Can I ask you about what the former Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr Rowan Williams) said when he said he felt that he had let down his gay friends over the gay marriage issue in the church at the time, and the current Archbishop of Canterbury has also talked about repentance over the gay issue. Do you feel that’s an appropriate language?

**DR SENTAMU:**

I mean I would have thought that where there has been - and again I’m on record - that whenever there has been admonishment of homosexual people, it’s really anathema to me because human beings are human beings and they shouldn’t be just judged on their sexual activity or their sexual preferences because everybody is of great worth. But the debate about gay marriage, again I’m on record saying that actually it could be a good institution but the state need to find a better language of describing it because we have now reached a stage where everything is the same. Now Andrew Marr and I are both men, but we’re different, and the suggestion that difference actually means that it isn’t important - I mean that language isn’t helpful. So I would say for myself that wherever we’ve treated homosexual people without respect and regard, that’s a cause for great regret and great repentance, but …
ANDREW MARR:
Archbishop, thank you very much indeed for that. You’ve also been ill, so it’s very wonderful to see you back as well, can I just say?

DR SENTAMU:
So I would say the same. And I just want to say to you what happened to me when I had this terrible illness, friends prayed for me, friends encouraged me …

ANDREW MARR:
And look what happened.

DR SENTAMU:
…. and I just hope the same will happen to you, you know.

ANDREW MARR:
Thank you so much.

DR SENTAMU:
Like in Luke Chapter VI, we had the man with a hand like yours. Jesus you know raises it up. And I’m going to …

ANDREW MARR:
*(over)* Hand it over. *(laughs)*

DR SENTAMU:
… and I’m going to work hard, I’m going to work there that your hand begins to work.

ANDREW MARR:
Needs some work on it, needs some work on it. Thank you so much, Archbishop.

DR SENTAMU:
And nice to see you. Nice to see you back. That’s lovely.
ANDREW MARR:
Thank you very much. Alright, thanks so much. Okay.

INTERVIEW ENDS