JUSTIN WELBY:
We’ve gone from a rule based approach to a principles based approach, which says that we accept there’s difference. Women will be bishops like all other bishops with no distinction at all, but we will seek for the groups who disagree with the ordination of women as bishops on theological grounds to continue to flourish within the church.

ANDREW MARR:
From the outside, it almost looks like you’re trying to kind of create a cordon sanitaire between those groups and the rest of the church as if there is something toxic about women bishops and those who’ve appointed them and so forth. Can you see why some women find that offensive?

JUSTIN WELBY:
I can see exactly why some women would find that offensive and the first couple of principles that the House of Bishops have stated says we’ve decided that women are bishops. It is not open to people to deny the validity of that decision. They are exactly the same as all other bishops. We’re also though saying that we’re not a political party, an organisation where you chuck out the ones you disagree with. That the church is a family and you may disagree vehemently with each other, but you have to
live together because you’re family.

ANDREW MARR:
Members of the church and commentators I’ve spoken to all seem to think you’re going to win this vote, but if you don’t can the bishops simply impose this on the rest of the church and ignore the Synod?

JUSTIN WELBY:
What happens if we lose the vote is a matter for the House of Bishops. I can’t dictate it and I’m not expecting to have to face that. I am hopeful that we will pass. The votes I think are there.

ANDREW MARR:
But you, to be clear, you can’t impose women bishops?

JUSTIN WELBY:
Absolutely not.
We will discuss in the House of Bishops what we do if it fails.

ANDREW MARR:
What would be the political consequences? David Cameron’s spoken out very, very clearly and forthrightly about how important this decision is to the sort of general … I guess the general public establishment of the country.

JUSTIN WELBY:
I think to the general public, this is almost incomprehensible, and it’s equally incomprehensible that we’re still talking about it. As I say, I’m hopeful it will pass. I’m not actually focused on what happens if it fails.

ANDREW MARR:
What’s the timescale, do you think, before there will be a woman bishop in this country?

JUSTIN WELBY:
There’s a good chance of a first woman bishop being announced at very early in 2015; probably being chosen possibly before that. But that depends.

ANDREW MARR:
Do you think that you will see an Archbishop of Canterbury who is a woman in your lifetime?

JUSTIN WELBY:
I’ve no idea. I’d be delighted if I did.

ANDREW MARR:
The big contradiction in many respects, looking at the church’s position, is that you’ve been basically very liberal in this matter and pushing it forward. When it comes to gay marriage, you’ve been on the other side of the argument. Can you explain to me why that’s the case because these are both things that come from biblical teaching – and in one case you’re saying culture has moved on, we need women bishops now; but when it comes to gay people getting married, you say no the culture hasn’t moved on.

JUSTIN WELBY:
The theological difference is quite a simple one, which is I think that theologically the church has been wrong not to ordain women as priests and bishops over the centuries. And I think if you look back at scripture, if you look at the nature of God, if you look at particularly the way the early church organised itself, we got caught up in the culture over the centuries as churches do at all times. The issue over sexuality, I’m very loathe to comment on in detail. Yes I was very clearly against same sex marriage when the bill came through and the position of the church remains unchanged on that. Our official teaching is completely unchanged. But we’re beginning a process of guided conversations, shared conversations in the church, and I just want to let those take their course and not preempt the way we are going to emerge from those decisions. I think within Anglicanism, we don’t have popes, we don’t have a pope. I’m not some kind of papal figure who says this is the way we’re going to do it. And so actually we listen to the sense of the spirit of God speaking through the people of God as we go through this process.
ANDREW MARR:
And I know that you’ve been talking to people from the gay community and so on about this issue …

JUSTIN WELBY:
Oh yeah.

ANDREW MARR:
… and it has been said on some of the websites and newspapers and so on, they think that you have changed your own position personally on this?

JUSTIN WELBY:
To be absolutely clear, I am … I have … I’ve not been convinced by the arguments for same sex marriage as marriage. I continue to struggle with the issue. Pastorally you meet people, you sit across the room with them, you talk to them, some wonderful priests, and you … your heart goes out to them.

ANDREW MARR:
Yes and lots of people in unselfish, long-term, profoundly strong relationships.

JUSTIN WELBY:
Precisely.

ANDREW MARR:
Your predecessor Rowan Williams has said recently that he thinks the church’s position on gay marriage at the moment is unstable and can’t sustain forever. Do you agree with him about that?

JUSTIN WELBY:
We’re in the middle of a prolonged period of disagreement and conversation and therefore by definition …
It is unstable.

JUSTIN WELBY:
… it is unstable and it’s … and it’s … and it’s … that’s something we have to deal with. We have a responsibility, all of us, to love and respect the global community of Christians who are part of the family - as they have to us.

ANDREW MARR:
Because part of the worldwide Anglican Communion, particularly in Africa, is outright homophobic and there has been an increase in hate crime …

JUSTIN WELBY:
Yes.

ANDREW MARR:
… there’s been an increase in attacks on homosexuals in Africa. I mean a lot of people say to you that as the Archbishop of Canterbury, you should have nothing to do with that and not let that affect your view of what should happen in this country.

JUSTIN WELBY:
And certainly I entirely agree that where there’s been homophobic attacks, which there have been, they are utterly inexcusable in every possible way. But it’s … it’s not about whether they affect us. It’s about the fact that we’re called to mutual love across cultural boundaries, and that is a really complicated and difficult thing.

ANDREW MARR:
Archbishop, there’s all these churches in East Africa and around that part of the world who think you are profoundly wrong on the questions like the ordination of bishops who take a very, very different view when it comes to gay marriage and homosexuality generally. They are rising. They are becoming more and more powerful. Is there bound to be at some point a schism in the Anglican Communion over these cultural issues?

JUSTIN WELBY:
As Christians, we believe that we are part of one family. We’re joined inextricably not by our own choice but by the choice of God, by our common faith in Christ. A schism is awful. If it happens, it happens, but our calling is to love one another and to find ways of good disagreement in a world that is completely incapable of good disagreement.

ANDREW MARR:
Can I ask you about a recent controversy that we’ve had here about very large numbers of people: pop stars, authors, famous people who have been aggressively avoiding paying their tax – staying just within the law, but not paying tax. What do you think the ethical, moral, Christian view of that would be?

JUSTIN WELBY:
Funnily enough, it’s one of … there’s a passage in the Epistle to the Romans that says pay your tax, and I think people have a duty to make a proper contribution to the society in the way … proportionate to their income; and therefore if they’re doing very well, they should be paying quite a lot, and there have to be serious questions about some of these tax avoidance schemes. At the same time, I think the tax system needs to be clear enough and sharp enough that this opportunity isn’t available. It’s both sides.

ANDREW MARR:
Absolutely. You’ve quoted St. John Chrysostom, the one-time Archbishop of Constantinople who was a big thorn in the flesh of the political authorities at the time, as I remember …

JUSTIN WELBY:
Yes.

ANDREW MARR:
… to the effect that if you are very wealthy, the money does not belong to you; it belongs to …

JUSTIN WELBY:
Exactly.

**ANDREW MARR:**
... the people generally. And if you hold back your money from people who are poorer than you, you are in effect stealing that money from them. Which suggests that when you talk about a change in culture, you’d like to see quite a radical change in culture where wealthy people are ashamed if they’re not giving a substantial proportion of that wealth to those less fortunate than themselves?

**JUSTIN WELBY:**
I would entirely agree with that and that was a problem then, it’s a problem throughout human history. There’s very few of us who find it easy not to have sticky fingers… and we all quite like a bit of money and usually a bit more than we’ve got. And there is an obligation to the common good and it’s not the same as the general interest. It’s to making sure that the poorest in our society can live dignified lives worthy of their humanity.

**ANDREW MARR:**
So you had lots of wealthy colleagues when you were … back in your days in the oil industry and banking and so forth. Is your message to them look in the mirror, think about society generally and put a bit more back?

**JUSTIN WELBY:**
Yes.

**ANDREW MARR:**
That’s very straightforward. Thank you very much indeed. Let’s move onto one of the other big issues I suppose confronting you which is, this is a Christian country and yet you’re not getting enough people into church. Meanwhile Islam is increasing all round this country as well. Are you one of those who sees a conflict between Christians in this country and Muslims in this country, a growing cultural and religious conflict developing?

**JUSTIN WELBY:**
It’s a very complex area that. There are certainly areas where, for all sorts of reasons, there has been more tension than in the past. But there is … For instance during Lent, I met up with one of the Muslim leaders, Ibrahim Mogra, and … three times and he brought a passage from the Quran and we looked at that and I brought a passage from St. John’s Gospel and we looked at that. And there was absolutely no sense of conflict there. We disagreed …

ANDREW MARR:
It was a proper conversation?

JUSTIN WELBY:
It was a proper, good disagreement. The church starts … The ancient principle of the church starts in hospitality, in welcome, in arms opened wide to all and everyone; and to listening, to being ready to explain our faith but to do so with grace. If other people want to behave differently, that’s fine. Our duty is that grace and hospitality and welcome and love that is universal and unconditional.

ANDREW MARR:
Well Archbishop, it’s fine up to a point. We’ve got lots of problems in this country. The Muslim community doesn’t have an Archbishop of Canterbury. It’s a different system of hierarchy and so forth.

JUSTIN WELBY:
Indeed.

ANDREW MARR:
Do you think it has been a problem in terms of the hierarchy the Muslims face in this country in combating extremism?

JUSTIN WELBY:
You’d have to ask them rather than me. I mean they … clearly there is an issue with people going to Syria and coming back highly radicalised. There is a problem with radicalisation. But the proportion of Muslims who are radicalised is extraordinarily small and I’m just edgy about developing a national culture of fear because I don’t
think that gets us anywhere and I think we’re in danger of slipping into a very fearful culture in which we see everyone against us and us against everyone and we’re constantly trying to defend ourselves. This country’s much bigger than that, much better than that.

ANDREW MARR:  
Do you think we’re becoming just a little hysterical on this subject, in short?

JUSTIN WELBY:  
I think we’ve becoming … we’ve been becoming too hysterical about this subject for some considerable period and it is a worry because we have huge differences with Islam as Christians, but that is absolutely no reason for hostility. Quite the reverse.

ANDREW MARR:  
And in terms of these competing cultures, it’s been suggested – including I think by your predecessor – that there should be some elements of Sharia law brought into British law. Do you agree with that?

JUSTIN WELBY:  
I think it is a fundamental principle that British law rests on - or English law because Scots are different of course – rests on English jurisprudence, and that no system of law can come in under any circumstances that contradicts the basic principles of English jurisprudence.

ANDREW MARR:  
The other big story sadly of the current week has been the Butler-Sloss Inquiry into child abuse.

JUSTIN WELBY:  
Yeah.

ANDREW MARR: 
I noticed you gave a press conference with the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster in which you both said that there had been historic cases of child abuse
in your communions, in your churches. Does that mean that you think there are bad stories still to come up about inside the Anglican Church and you’re bracing yourself for that?

JUSTIN WELBY:
I would love to say there weren’t, but I expect there are. There are in almost every institution in this land. This is … It’s something I deal with every day. And it is becoming clearer and clearer that for many, many years things were not dealt with as they should have been dealt with. And we must show justice to survivors of abuse. That is the first and absolute principle. And we must be absolutely transparent in every possible way and we have to keep saying how utterly devastated we are with the terrible things that were done in the past and how sorry we are.

ANDREW MARR:
Let’s move onto your own faith. You’ve had very good times and you’ve had very dark times in your life, particularly when you were much, much younger. At what point in your life did your faith become particularly important? When did you feel God talking to you specifically?

JUSTIN WELBY:
I think when I was about er … - doing my sums – 19 or 20, somewhere around there. When I was 19, there was a very crucial moment of commitment following Christ. And then there’s been … It’s a journey. It goes on and on and it changes the whole time. It’s never the same.

ANDREW MARR:
Were you initially embarrassed by that?

JUSTIN WELBY:
Yes. I was deeply embarrassed. I remember the first thing I said to the person when I sort of prayed a prayer of commitment to Christ was, “Please don’t tell anybody.”

ANDREW MARR:
Your predecessor has also said I think in his autobiography that he absolutely hated
the job. How are you enjoying it?

JUSTIN WELBY:
I’m rather worried about the fact that on most things, most of the time, I’m really enjoying myself.

ANDREW MARR:
Well long may you continue. Thank you very much indeed, Archbishop.

JUSTIN WELBY:
Thank you very much indeed to you.

INTERVIEW ENDS