COMMUNIQUE:

2ND ANGLICAN INTERCULTURAL MISSION CONFERENCE

"Building Greater Capacity and Understanding for Effective Intercultural Mission".

Two hundred delegates from England, Northern Ireland and Ghana gathered in St Martin's House, Leicester Diocese, from 20th to 22nd March for the Second Anglican Intercultural Mission Conference. The conference aimed to enhance the delegates' capacity and understanding for effective intercultural mission within the Church of England, building on the successful inaugural gathering in St Pauls Slough in 2023.

The conference coincided with the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March). It was an occasion to remember the late **Bishop Karowei Dorgu** for his pioneering contribution to the intercultural church and racial justice within the Church of England and to launch Bishop Martyn Snow's unusual and groundbreaking book, "An Intercultural Church for a Multicultural World."

The conference allowed for the sharing of expertise, experiences, and stories from various churches, groups, intercultural networks, and institutions. The delegates' experience of being together in one space built a sense of divine community and hope for the Anglican Church's intercultural future.

The conference was immersed in intercultural worship, prayer, and two eucharist services, which supported inspiring input from speakers, worship leaders, and preachers. Eight keynote addresses and twelve interactive seminars persuaded delegates to advocate for racial justice, promote global cultural awareness, engage in God's great commission to all nations, and foster rehearsals for heavenly worship to champion intercultural worshipping communities.

In his welcome address, **Bishop Saju Muthalaly** of Loughborough emphasised the importance of blessing, eating, listening, and learning as core principles of being built together in Christ. The Conference Chair, **Bishop Tim Wambunya**, preaching at the opening eucharist, used Jesus' story about a lost sheep in Matthew 18 to challenge delegates to prioritise the needs of the marginalised and weak, the neglected, the excluded, and those who haven't got space to participate, to be represented, to minister, to sing, or dance in the Church of England, even if it means diverting our attention from the majority. **Jessie Tang,** the Intercultural Ministry Director at the Diocese of Leicester, discussed the Intercultural Church as a third space where the cultures in the church form the culture of the church. She argued that colour blindness hinders this and that relationships are important for such a church. **The Revd Dr Catherine Okoronkwo,** The Racial Justice Officer in the Diocese of Bristol, explored how intersectionality (intersection theory) offers a lens by which a gospel response can be made towards dismantling institutional and systemic racism in its individual, relational, structural, and ideological oppressions of difference. **The Revd Preb John Root,** the father of Intercultural Mission in the Church of England, while speaking on preparations for Windrush 100, emphasised the need to work on training culturally intelligent leaders, have a structure for greater sharing of experience, and develop a mission to *all* ethnic groups. **Nathaniel Jennings,** the OMF UK's Intercultural Ministries Director, speaking on "An Intercultural Approach to Christian Witness and Mission", explored how we can be fruitful as God's people in obeying Christ's commission to make disciples of all nations in today's local and global context. The **Revd Canon Sharon Prentis,** the Deputy Director of the Racial Justice Unit, explored the importance of living intentionally in diverse intercultural communities within the Church. She emphasised the need to face cultural disagreements head-on, promote unity, cultivate fellowship, and promote genuine relationships based on love and respect. **The Revd Dr Mohan Seevaratnam,** a General Practitioner (GP) and Priest in the Diocese of Willesden spoke about hospitality, flexibility, adaptability, and humility as important values and attitudes for intercultural ministries. He suggested intentionality in these areas will help equip leaders and congregations in their intercultural missional endeavours. **The Revd Dr Israel Olofinjana,** the Director of the One People Commission at the Evangelical Alliance, explored some of the challenges that the Majority-World (Asians, Latin Americans, Africans) Christians living in Britain face regarding developing or transitioning from a multicultural church to an intercultural church. He suggested that their leadership is not fully accepted in Britain and is still being questioned; therefore, they are on probation! **Hannah Ling,** the Social Justice Adviser in the Diocese of Oxford, spoke about "Uncontroversial discrimination" and the need for churches to challenge disadvantage and racism towards Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) communities.

These are some of the highlights of the presentations. The inaugural Anglican Journal for Intercultural Mission will publish all the papers and seminars shortly.

The Key Learning Points from the 3 Day Conference:

1. **Exemplifying Unity and Fellowship:** The church must embody unity and fellowship across cultures, reflecting the new humanity in Christ.
2. **Biblical Roots of Intercultural Worship:** Intercultural Worshipping Communities (IWC) derive from Biblical principles, akin to the New Testament Church portrayed in Acts 2.
3. **Authentic Intercultural Relations:** Genuine intercultural relationships require authenticity, love, respect, and truthfulness, as well as acknowledgement of the strengths and limitations of various cultural concepts.
4. **Embracing Diversity:** Churches should embrace diversity with humility and grace, fostering an environment where differences are celebrated rather than homogenised.
5. **Third Space Identity Exploration:** Intercultural Churches serve as a "third space" for exploring identity, fostering personal relationships to combat stereotypes and promote inclusivity.
6. **Addressing Historical Injustices:** Acknowledging and repenting of past and present racism is crucial for achieving God's justice, which is intertwined with issues like climate justice and slavery.
7. **Acknowledging Intersectional Challenges:** Intercultural Worshipping Communities must address intersectional challenges beyond race, including sexuality and class disparities.
8. **Practicing Radical Hospitality:** Radical hospitality is vital for the growth of Intercultural Worshipping Communities. It provides sanctuary and refuge, especially for those estranged from their families due to their faith.
9. **Language and Cultural Expression:** Recognizing the importance of language, especially in Anglicanism, in fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance within diverse communities.
10. **Prioritizing Intercultural Growth:** The Church of England is beginning to prioritise the growth of Intercultural Worshipping Communities, but more support and training pathways for leaders are needed.

Mission Action Points (CREED)

1. **Creating Resources for Liturgy, Worship, and Governance:**
    - Develop a comprehensive resource that includes liturgical materials, worship practices, and governance structures tailored specifically for Intercultural Worshipping Communities (IWC). Prayers and hymns should be included to reflect the diversity of cultures represented in the community and establish governance models that promote inclusivity and representation from various cultural backgrounds.
2. **Research and Data Collection on ICWC Growth Factors:**
    - Conduct thorough research and data collection to identify the factors that contribute to the growth and sustainability of Intercultural Worshipping Communities. This may involve studying successful IWCs, interviewing leaders and members, and analysing demographic trends. For instance, research could reveal that IWCs with strong community engagement programs tend to experience faster growth rates.
3. **Enabling IWC Regional Groups and Learning Communities:**
    - Facilitate the formation of regional groups and learning communities for IWCs to collaborate, share resources, and support one another. These groups could meet regularly to exchange ideas,

discuss challenges, and provide mutual encouragement. For example, IWCs in a particular city or region could organise joint worship events or community outreach initiatives.

4. **Establishing Ideas and Best Practices for IWC Network**:

    - Compile a list of innovative ideas and best practices from existing IWCs to create a repository of resources for the broader IWC network. This could include strategies for multicultural worship, effective communication methods for diverse congregations, and approaches to resolving intercultural conflicts. For instance, sharing success stories of IWCs that have successfully integrated cultural celebrations into their worship services could inspire other communities to do the same.

5. **Developing Training Modules for ICWC Leaders:**

    - Develop comprehensive training modules specifically designed for both lay and ordained leaders of Intercultural Worshipping Communities. These modules should cover cross-cultural communication, conflict resolution in multicultural settings, and cultural competency. For example, training sessions could include interactive workshops where leaders practice navigating cultural differences and learn how to create inclusive environments within their communities.

After three days of prayers, worship, fellowship, discussion, and learning, delegates agreed on the following mission action points. They thanked the Conference organisers, particularly the Bishops of Leicester and Loughborough, for their generous hospitality, the Racial Justice Unit for funding and Bishop Tim Wambunya, the Conference Chair, for his leadership and vision.

+ Timothy

Bishop Tim Wambunya

Conference Chair

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