



RECONCILIATION
INITIATIVES

5th Cohort

Reconciling Mission 2025

A dynamic learning and
development programme



WHAT IS RECONCILING MISSION?

- A learning and development programme for small groups of diocesan and cathedral clergy;
- A programme which resources participants with a vision for mission:
 - as a journey towards greater reconciliation in the world,
 - marked by deeper engagement with local communities,
 - drawing on an asset-based community development approach.
- *Note: this is not a process for training a diocesan mediation team, or for equipping participants with skills for handling conflict.*

WHY IS THIS NEEDED?

The church currently faces a significant missional challenge:

- There's a need to respond to social hardship, which has:
 - increased since the economic crash of 2008;
 - been compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic;
 - intensified through the recent cost-of-living crisis.
- There is also a need to address:
 - the ongoing climate emergency; and
 - persisting racial inequalities.

Reconciling Mission has been developed to address this context. We offer:

- a vision for the emerging future of the church, following the Covid disruption;
- an approach which connects with the enduring Anglican Five Marks of Mission, and
- a distinctive asset-based treasure-seeking approach focussed on local partnerships.

WHO IS RECONCILING MISSION FOR?

- Experienced parish and cathedral clergy, or diocesan officers, of diverse theological traditions;
- Clergy from both rural and urban ministry contexts;
- Leaders wanting to explore fresh approaches to missional engagement with local communities, in a learning community with others; and
- Anglican Dioceses wanting to incorporate diverse approaches to the current missional challenge, and draw on external resourcing.

“ When leading woolly Anglicans in the fluid ... theological space of parish life – where people’s theology is ‘who they are and what they do’, and not ‘what they say and preach’ – Reconciling Mission is helpful as it gives an articulation of our participation in the wider reconciliation of God. This puts a more robust framework around an alternative model of evangelism to the traditional ‘go preach’ model. ”

PARTICIPANT IN COHORT 2



WHAT SORT OF GROUP?

- A group of 4 or 6 participants, including ideally one from the Cathedral;
- Identified by the Bishop, Dean and senior staff against criteria such as:
 - An even mix of genders;
 - Experienced leaders, people of emotional maturity;
 - Collaborative leaders, who welcome working in partnership with those outside the church;
 - Participants representing the ethnic and other diversity of their Diocese;
 - Participants of relative geographical proximity, for ease of face-to-face meetings;
- Ideally, participants will previously have:
 - Completed foundational training in handling conflict; and
 - Developed group process and facilitation skills.

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

1. A week-long residential course of learning, at the outset;
2. On-going coaching over 18 months, meeting regularly online in small groups;
3. One additional online webinar;
4. Two in-person day-conferences, usually at Coventry Cathedral, occurring mid-way and at the end of the process.

WHAT DO PARTICIPANTS NEED?

- A commitment to learning, and to engaging with the entire programme, over a 2-year process;
- An enthusiasm for reaching out to local neighbours and organisations;
- A desktop or laptop computer with a webcam, for online Zoom meetings; and
- A mobile phone with the WhatsApp app, for communication with facilitators and diocesan group.

WHAT'S THE RESIDENTIAL COURSE?

A dynamic adult learning process, integrating:

- Theoretical input;
- Theological and Biblical reflection;
- Experiential learning; and
- Anglican worship;

The venue is Bestwood Lodge in Nottinghamshire, offering:

- a fruitful learning environment;
- a space which facilitates community-building.

Facilitated by a highly experienced team:

- **Alastair McKay**: director of RI, with 30 years' experience in leading adult learning;
- **Anita Beeden**: an education consultant, teacher and facilitator with many years' experience of facilitating adult learning and training;
- **Al Barrett**: rector of Hodge Hill Church in Birmingham, with over 10 years' experience in applying an asset-based approach to community development;
- **Paul Wright**: a community animator and street connector, with many years' experience in community-building in Birmingham.

Visiting speakers will include:

- A speaker from HeartEdge, Together for the Common Good, or Partnership for Missional Church (CMS)
- An Anglican Bishop or leading theologian of global majority heritage

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES?

The overall programme objectives are:

1. To introduce a vision for the church's mission within a wider understanding of God's reconciling work in the world;
2. To offer key frameworks and practical tools to enable the church to engage deeply with local neighbourhoods, using an asset-based approach;
3. To resource participants for taking action in their local context, grounded in listening to the community;
4. To nurture collegiality and contribute to a creative missional movement in Anglican Provinces in Britain and Ireland.

“ *It's been an incredible experience to see how readily others have created a safe space in which all, who wanted to, were able to share situations or problems that they were going through. I found the structured approach really helpful in getting to the actual issue(s). ... I also found the webinars informative, engaging and interesting. These were times in my diary that I looked forward to.* **”**

PARTICIPANT IN COHORT 1

The planned learning outcomes for the residential are that participants will have:

- Reflected theologically and located the church's mission within the arc of God's reconciling work, connecting with the Five Marks of Mission;
- Worked with a theoretical framework for engaging with social divisions and injustices, and mapped existing outreach onto this;
- Explored a theologically-grounded ABCD model, drawing on a community's gifts and strengths;
- Developed a provisional plan to begin implementing a collaborative community-building approach in their own context.

HOW IS IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORTED?

After the initial residential, there's an 18-month process of follow-up coaching:

- Participants provide regular short video updates, to enhance accountability;
- Participants form part of regular online gatherings, with a group from another Diocese;
- Groups meet on a rotational basis to facilitate dialogue with all groups in the cohort;
- These gatherings are action learning groups, using a group coaching process, led by an RI facilitator.

By the end of the process, each group should also develop a plan for sharing some of their learning with others in their Diocese.

WHAT'S SPECIAL?

Distinctive features include:

- A hopeful and practical theology, drawing on an asset-based approach;
- A broad vision of God's reconciling work;
- A focus on serving local neighbourhoods and addressing issues of injustice;
- An investment in leaders who can share learning with others;
- Intentional mixing of diverse people to form a supportive learning community;
- Designed for small groups attending together for more effective support, follow-through and implementation; and
- A setting to develop good practice, identify next steps, share learning, and move churches into a deeper engagement with their local communities.

“ Working alongside and serving ‘with’ rather than ‘to’ means that the church has a humbler place in its involvement with the community. Not talking down and giving prescriptions; but being a listening and supportive partner in what’s already going on. As a humbler listener, co-worker and partner, that will be a much better place from which to be able to share God’s loving, and our faith... ”
This process has driven us deeper into community partnership.

Participant in Cohort 2

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Independent research with the first three cohorts highlighted the following benefits:

- Peer support and non-competitive collegiality in the process of addressing missional challenges;
- Connection with fundamental questions about mission, ministry and sharing good news, and articulation of the value of working with local people;
- Prioritising the work of listening, to peers, congregation members, local people and the Holy Spirit, to discern how God is at work; and
- The evolution and development of existing and new outreach to local neighbourhoods, in partnership with a wide range of organisations outside the church, as part of contributing to reconciliation in society.

WHAT’S THE COST?

The invited diocesan contribution for the 5th cohort is £1,050 per participant, and coverage of travel and associated expenses. This contribution:

- Covers around two thirds of the delivery costs;
- Gives full participation in the whole programme, including:
 - The initial residential (excluding travel costs);
 - The follow-up group coaching sessions;
 - The two day-conferences (excluding travel and hotel costs).

The balance of the delivery costs is covered by RI, from our reserves.

WHAT ARE THE KEY DATES AND DEADLINES?

By 20 December 2024:	Provisional indication of interest
By 14 February 2025:	Firm commitment by senior staff to sponsor a group, and details of identified diocesan groups of 4-6
By 28 February 2025:	Deadline for Cohort 5 applications from all diocesan nominees
March/April 2025:	Preliminary online meetings with Cohort 5 groups + senior staff rep.
11-16 May 2025:	Cohort 5 residential at Bestwood Lodge, Nottingham
June 2025 - January 2027:	Online action learning groups
17 March 2026:	Day conference at [Coventry Cathedral – TBC]
16 March 2027:	Day conference at [Coventry Cathedral – TBC]

RECONCILING MISSION 2025 (5TH COHORT) PROGRAMME

OUTLINE OF RESIDENTIAL
11-16 MAY 2025, BESTWOOD LODGE

		Sunday 11 May	Monday 12 May	Tuesday 13 May	Wednesday 14 May	Thursday 15 May	Friday 16 May
Typical Things			7:40am Contemplative prayer; 8:15am Breakfast	7:40am Contemplative prayer; 8:15am Breakfast	7:40am Contemplative prayer; 8:15am Breakfast	7:40am Contemplative prayer; 8:15am Breakfast	7:40am Contemplative prayer; 8:15am Breakfast
9:00-10:45am	Travel to Bestwood Lodge from home location	S1: Intro to two theological models, echoed in the RM theoretical framework, with an exploration of related theological themes	S1 (9:00-10:30am): Bible study, led by Bishop or theologian of global majority heritage	S1: ABCD4: Nurturing a neighbourhood ecology, including identifying & nurturing 'connectors', 'bumping spaces' and interconnections	S1 (9:00-10:30am): Reconciling Mission stories: learning from previous cohorts	S1: Presenting provisional plans, in plenary, and being commissioned for next steps	
11:15am-12:45pm	12:30pm Arrival at Bestwood Lodge	S2a: Reflecting on 'detours' and God's integration in our lives S2b: Categorising exercise, of existing projects and initiatives, using the RM framework	S2 (11:00-12:45): ABCD1: Intro to an asset-based community development (ABCD) approach for engagement with a local neighbourhood Al Barrett & Paul Wright	S2: ABCD5: Accompanying churches in a 'journey outwards', including being interrupted and adopting a new stance towards leadership	S2 (11:00-12:45): Exploring wider issues about moving towards reconciliation in society today	S2: Closing programme elements 12:00pm: Eucharist	
1pm Lunch							
2pm - 3:30pm	S1: Participant introductions, and intro to the Reconciling Mission (RM) programme	S3: Mapping our local neighbourhoods, and relating this to our understanding of 'community'	S3: Free time	S3: Free time	S3: Free time	S3: Individual time reflecting on next steps and preparing a provisional plan for what going to take forward on return home	1:00pm Departures from Bestwood Lodge
4:15pm - 5:45pm	S2: Intro to the RM theoretical framework of mission as a journey towards greater reconciliation, connecting with the Five Marks of Mission	S4: New approach to Christian mission today: Speaker from HeartEdge, T4CG or PMC/CMS	S4: ABCD2: Exploring missional economies (and institutional pressures) of 'counting in' and 'giving out', and their relationship with power and its use	S4: An introduction to and experience of Action Learning Groups, led by Alastair McKay & Mina Munns	S4a: Sharing provisional plans in diocesan groups S4b: Space to plan diocesan group contributions to the evening party, e.g. a game		Travel back to home location
6.30pm Dinner							
7:30pm - 9pm	S3: Free time	S5: Free time	S5: ABCD3: Discovering abundance in our communities, and engaging in 'good life' conversations	S5: Leading when you don't know where you're going	S5: Party, incorporating participant planned activities		
9pm Compline							

