

6th Cohort

Reconciling Mission 2027

A continuing formation
programme for clergy



WHAT IS RECONCILING MISSION?

- A continuing formation programme for small groups of parish clergy;
- A distinctive learning process which offers participants vision, capacity and practices for leading in mission and missional change:
 - as a journey towards God's preferred and promised future in reconciling all things,
 - marked by public engagement in mission *with* local communities,
 - drawing on the principles and practices of both the missional church and asset-based community development (ABCD).
- *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 is a need to respond to the polarising of society, after the end of the growth of western economies leading to increasing inequality and cost-of-living crises alongside the climate emergency and the threats of AI.
- There is also a need to address:
 - churches that still exhibit the culture and behaviours of Modernity, when the world has radically moved on;
 - the “twilight” of Christendom; and
 - unhelpful notions of leadership and change which disable the local church.

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

- A vision for the emerging future of the church participating in God's mission;
- Capacity-building in spiritual leadership for mission, based on faithful and disruptive practices;
- An approach which connects with the enduring Anglican Five Marks of Mission; and
- An asset-based treasure-seeking approach focussed on local partnerships.

WHO IS RECONCILING MISSION FOR?

- Parish clergy of diverse theological traditions, especially those in the early years of a new ministry;
- Clergy from different ministry contexts who are not already part of a larger ministry team that meets regularly;
- 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 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. ”



WHAT SORT OF GROUP?

- A diocesan group of 6 to 8 participants;
- Identified by the senior staff against criteria such as:
 - An even mix of genders;
 - Leaders 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 in pairs or threes of relative geographical proximity, for ease of mutual encouragement.

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

1. A continuous five-day residential course of learning, at the outset;
2. On-going coaching and reflection over 18 months, meeting online every few weeks in small groups;
3. Two in-person 24-hour conferences, usually at Coventry Cathedral, mid-way and at the end of the process.

WHAT DO PARTICIPANTS NEED?

- A commitment to learning, and to engaging with the entire process over an 18-month period;
- A curiosity about how God might be at work among 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 their diocesan group.

WHAT'S THE RESIDENTIAL COURSE?

A dynamic adult learning process involving:

- Reflective practice, including some theology and theory;
- Learning some spiritual practices, including reading the Bible in community; and
- Daily worship.

The venue is Bestwood Lodge, Nottingham, offering a central location in the country, a fruitful learning environment, and 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;
- **Nigel Rooms:** a missiologist, practical theologian and spiritual director who has led accompaniment of over 150 English churches in a missional change process;
- **Mina Munns:** an Anglican priest and freelance facilitator, with many years' experience of training and consulting with churches;
- **Al Barrett:** rector of Hodge Hill Church in Birmingham, with over 12 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.

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;
2. To offer key frameworks and spiritual practices to enable the church to engage deeply with local neighbourhoods, including drawing on a strengths-based approach;
3. To grow the capacity of participants in leading missional change in churches;
4. To resource participants for acting in their local context, grounded in listening to the community;
5. To identify and develop a small group of allies to affect missional change in the congregation; and
6. To nurture collegiality and contribute to a creative missional movement.

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;
- Understood the value of and be equipped to introduce spiritual practices to their congregations;
- Worked with a theoretical framework for engaging with social divisions and injustices;
- Explored an ABCD model, drawing on a community's gifts and strengths; and,
- Identified a core small group of lay people to get on board with a new missional approach in their local context.

“I deeply appreciated the thoughtful and prayerful way the initial residential was led and structured. The process fostered reflection, authentic dialogue, and meaningful connection, and offered solid input and good group engagement. The leadership created a safe, inclusive space where diverse voices were honoured, and participation was encouraged over passive listening. The conference modelled a Spirit-led, reconciliatory journey rooted in community and theological depth.”

HOW IS IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORTED?

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

- Participants provide regular short video updates, to enhance accountability;
- Participants join online gatherings, at regular intervals, with a group from another Diocese;
- Groups meet on a rotational basis to allow dialogue with all groups in the cohort;
- Online gatherings are a mixture of action learning groups, using a structured group coaching process, and “balcony-view” groups to reflect on the process of facilitating cultural change. The groups are led by RI facilitators.

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

WHAT'S SPECIAL?

Distinctive features include:

- A hopeful and practical missiology that addresses the deep realities of the Church's current dilemma;
- A focus on two-way interaction at the boundary of the church and her local community, which addresses social inequalities;
- An investment in leaders who form a supportive learning community and who can share learning with others;
- Designed for small groups attending together for more effective support and follow-through; and
- A setting to develop good practice, identify next steps 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.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Independent research with the first three cohorts highlighted these 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;
- 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 a new engagement with local neighbourhoods, including working in partnership with a wide range of organisations outside the church.

WHAT’S THE COST?

In 2027, the invited diocesan contribution is £1,250 per participant. Travel expenses for the initial residential and the day-conferences, and accommodation and an evening meal for the day-conferences, also need to be covered by the participants’ Diocese or their parishes.

WHAT ARE THE KEY DATES AND DEADLINES?

By 15 December 2026:	Firm indication of interest
By 15 February 2027:	Firm commitment by senior staff to sponsor a group, and details of identified group of 6-8 participants
By 1 March 2027:	Deadline for Cohort 6 applications from all diocesan nominees
March/April 2027:	Preliminary online meetings with Cohort 6 groups + senior staff rep.
24-28 May 2027:	Residential at Bestwood Lodge, Nottingham
June 2027 – January 2029:	Online action learning and balcony-view groups
21 March 2028:	Day conference (at Coventry Cathedral – TBC)
13 March 2029:	Day conference (at Coventry Cathedral – TBC)

RECONCILING MISSION 2027 (6TH COHORT)

OUTLINE OF RESIDENTIAL
24-28 MAY 2027, BESTWOOD LODGE

Monday 24 May		Tuesday 25 May		Wednesday 26 May		Thursday 27 May		Friday 28 May		
Timings			7:40am Contemplative prayer; 8:00am <i>Breakfast</i>	7:40am Contemplative prayer; 8:00am <i>Breakfast</i>	7:40am Contemplative prayer; 8:00am <i>Breakfast</i>	7:40am Contemplative prayer; 8:00am <i>Breakfast</i>	7:40am Contemplative prayer; 8:00am <i>Breakfast</i>	7:40am Contemplative prayer; 8:00am <i>Breakfast</i>		
9:00-11:00am	Travel to Bestwood Lodge, Nottingham, from home location 12:30pm Arrival at Bestwood Lodge	S1a: PMC Dwelling in the Word S1b: Intro to the RM theoretical framework of mission as a journey towards greater reconciliation, connecting with 5 Marks of Mission	S1a: PMC Dwelling in the Word S1b: ABCD1: Intro to an asset-based community development (ABCD) approach to community building - led by Al Barrett & Paul Wright	S1a: PMC Dwelling in the Word S1b: An introduction to and experience of Action Learning Groups	S1a: PMC Dwelling in the Word S1b: Presenting provisional plans, in plenary, and being commissioned for next steps					
		S2: Intro to two foundational theological stories, echoed in the RM theoretical framework	S2: ABCD2: Exploring missional economies (and institutinal pressures) of 'counting in' and 'giving out', and introducing a treasure-seeking approach	S2: Leading when you don't know where you're going	S2: Closing programme elements, and concluding Eucharist					
	1pm Lunch									
2:00-3:30pm	S1: Participant introductions, and intro to the <i>Reconciling Mission</i> (RM) programme	S3: Mapping our local neighbourhoods, and relating this to our understanding of 'community'	S3: ABCD3: Discovering abundance in our communities, and engaging in 'good life' conversations	S3: Individual time reflecting on next steps and preparing a provisional plan for who going to work with and what going to take forward on return					2:00pm Departures from Bestwood Lodge Travel back to home location	
4:15-5:45pm	S4: Introduction to the <i>Missio Dei</i> and five framing questions; and an intro to <i>Partnership for Missional Church</i> (PMC) and Dwelling in the Word	S4: Reflecting on 'detours' and God's integration of detours into our lives and missional journeys as local communities; and PMC Focus for Missional Action.	S4: ABCD4: Nurturing a neighbourhood ecology, including identifying & nurturing 'connectors', 'bumping spaces' and interconnections	S4a: Sharing provisional plans in diocesan groups S4b: Space to plan diocesan group contributions to the evening party, e.g. a game						
	6.30pm Dinner									
	S5: Free time	S5: Free time	S5: Free time	S5: Free time						
	9pm Compline									S5: Party, incorporating participant planned activities

