



BREAKING THE CHAINS OF INJUSTICE: REIMAGINING MISSIONAL THEOLOGIES TODAY

INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION 2026

MANILA, THE PHILIPPINES, 9 - 13 FEBRUARY 2026

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WELCOME

USPG

I warmly welcome and commend this report, *Breaking the Chains of Injustice: Reimagining Missional Theologies Today*. The fruit of USPG's triennial International Consultation, held in Manila in February 2026, it is a deeply collaborative document that reflects the generous and creative engagement of its participants from 31 different churches within the Anglican Communion. Wonderfully hosted by the Episcopal Church of the Philippines (ECP) and the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI), participants gathered to share, learn and express solidarity.

And to be bold in doing theology.

This International Consultation explored the legacies of colonialism on cultures, language and land. For those in the Philippines, the wounds were inflicted by the Spanish, American and Japanese, for others the French or Portuguese, but, of course, for most within the Communion Anglicanism took shape in the shadow of the British empire.

As we gathered to reimagine and renew our mission theology as participation in God's ongoing work of justice, we did so deeply conscious that we all live out our faith in Jesus Christ at a moment of profound global disruption, conflict and uncertainty. Indeed, within a fortnight of our departure, this would deepen with the joint Israel/US strike on Iran. The multiple, mostly unintended consequences of this intervention are only just beginning to play out.

We heard tales of forced displacement of peoples across our world – from the rainforests of Amazonia to the Highlands of Scotland - and came to see the many ways in which we could understand injustice in terms of estrangement. Estrangement not just from land, but from identity and culture, from the earth and our relationship with one another.

We heard of contemporary violence, injustice and deprivations, all too often flowing from deeply embedded and long-established patterns of exploitation that continue to deny people's rights and voices and their capacity to make a living, in the face of the demands for mining, logging, agribusiness, militarisation, even conservation.

Like beautiful weaving, this report is full of colour, texture and intriguing detail, conveying the beauty, diversity and challenges of the culture and contexts within which God calls

us as the Body of Christ. It is shot through with testimonies of struggle and resistance and solidarity that bring radiant light into the darkest abuses of brutal economic and political power. It renews our trust in the God who does not abandon us to the stories we inherit but invites us to become co-creators of a more truthful and loving future.

That invitation to work towards a more just future finds affirmation in the communiqué at the end of this report. Herein there is a challenge, embraced wholeheartedly by the participants and offered to all within the Anglican Communion. Grounded in our Anglican identity and the Five Marks of Mission, it commends us to be 'doers of the word'.

It calls us to commit. To truly commit to a mission theology in which evangelisation and discipleship are inseparable from the struggle for justice and the integrity of creation; to listen to theologies arising from communities whose identity is bound to land and sea; to promote worship that respects the languages of the people and everyday speech; to a truth-telling about the links between Anglican mission, colonialism, slavery, plantation economies and racialised hierarchies; to stand in prayerful solidarity with churches that risk persecution or death defending land, labour and life; and to place the voices of those who have been marginalised at the centre of our theology.

In this report there is much to educate and inform, to challenge and provoke. But these are not simply words. This report is a testimony to the lives of all those sisters and brothers, across our Communion, who, with Christ-like courage, compassion and commitment are weaving justice into the hearts of the communities they serve.

In the name of the one who brings true liberation for all, Jesus Christ.



**The Revd Canon Dr Duncan Dormor,
General Secretary, USPG**

We note with sadness that Prof Jione Havea, who led one of the Bible Studies, passed away shortly after the conference. We honour his contribution and lasting impact.

FOREWORD

IGLESIA FILIPINA INDEPENDIENTE

Something remarkable happened in Manila in February 2026; and it was not simply the USPG International Consultation itself.

It was not only that churches from across the world came together. What was remarkable was what happened when we actually looked at one another: when stories surfaced, when silences broke open, when people who had travelled from vastly different contexts found themselves confessing the same ache, the same anger, the same stubborn, unrelenting hope.

In a world where inequality deepens, human dignity is assaulted daily, and the margins grow ever wider, the Church is called not merely to witness but to act. The Iglesia Filipina Independiente has long understood that faithfulness to the Gospel is inseparable from solidarity with the poor and the oppressed; a conviction rooted in our history and renewed in every generation. The Manila Consultation reaffirmed that this calling is not ours alone, but the shared vocation of the whole Church of Christ, expressed across borders, traditions, and contexts.

The deliberations of these days remind us that mission is not a programme to be managed, but a life to be lived — in the streets, in communities, in the faces of those whom society has cast aside. That conviction was not merely affirmed in Manila. It was deepened, widened, and set on fire by the witness of companions who carry the same flame in different corners of the world.

This report is the fruit of those days. But the real fruit will be borne in what we do when we return to our provinces, dioceses, parishes, communities, and streets. The consultation has ended. The mission of the Church has not.

May this report serve not as a record of what was said behind closed doors, but as a summons to what must be done out in the world. The Church exists for the world; and it is to that world, broken, yearning, and beloved of God, that we now turn with renewed purpose and deepened resolve.

On behalf of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente,



**The Most Revd Joel O. Porlares,
Obispo Maximo,
Iglesia Filipina Independiente**

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES

We warmly welcome this report and remain deeply grateful that our country was chosen to host such an important gathering of esteemed Bishops and Archbishops, clergy and church leaders, theologians and missiologists, ecumenical partners and sisters and brothers in Christ from around the world. In Filipino culture, you were not merely visitors, but part of our family.

Reimagining mission theology is not a passive process. It challenges us to a mission that is transformative — one that actively confronts injustice and participates in God's work of liberation. Rooted in Isaiah 58:6, our theme is a prophetic call 'to break every yoke and let the oppressed go free'. By moving from maintenance to transformation, from triumphalism to humility, mutuality, repentance, and partnership, we rediscover the gospel's liberating power and shared mission in Christ.

In this, we also recognise that our world is marked with injustice; conflict, migration, corruption, and ecological crisis. In this reality, we affirm that 'the wound of one is the wound of all'.

We are all called to reflect deeply on land, language, and legacy. For many, land is life and identity, yet it is often taken through displacement and exploitation. Language carries culture and faith, yet many voices have been silenced. Legacy calls us to face history honestly, seek healing, and pursue transformation together.

We thank USPG for putting this report together, may God use it to guide our listening, deepen our solidarity, and strengthen our courage to act for justice, bearing lasting fruit for God's mission in the world.

In Christ,



**The Most Revd Nestor D. Poltic,
Prime Bishop, Episcopal Church
in the Philippines**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report highlights the key discussions, reflections and outcomes of USPG's International Consultation held in Manila, Philippines, from 6th to 13th February 2026. The consultation brought together 40 leaders from across the Anglican Communion to reflect on the theme "To Break the Chains of Injustice: Reimagining Missional Theologies Today" (Isaiah 58:6).

The programme was structured around 3 interwoven sub-themes: language, land and legacy. These themes were explored through Bible studies, presentations, panel discussions and prayers. The consultation provided a platform for delegates to discuss the Anglican Church's colonial history, examine how it relates to injustice and continues to shape identity and mission.

The sessions on language highlighted its role in shaping identity, belonging and accessibility within the Anglican Communion. The delegates emphasised the need to reclaim/prioritise local languages, promote indigenised liturgies and develop contextualised theologies as key steps in dismantling

colonial patterns. Language was perceived as both a tool of oppression and a means of liberation. Land was recognised as a sacred gift from God, deeply connected to identity, spirituality and community life, particularly for Indigenous people. During the session on land, the delegates examined the ongoing impact of land dispossession, environmental degradation and extractive economies, while calling for a renewed theology of land rooted in stewardship, justice and the "economics of enough", as well as for the church to stand in solidarity with affected communities. The sessions on legacy examined the Church's historical complicity in slavery, colonialism and cultural erasure and highlighted the need for truth-telling and developing concrete steps towards reparative justice.

The consultation concluded with a shared commitment to be doers of God's word. A communiqué was produced, inviting partners in the Anglican Church to break the chains of injustice and express solidarity through prayer, learning from Indigenous communities and reviewing institutional/theological structures.



**IS NOT THIS THE FAST THAT I CHOOSE: TO LOOSE THE BONDS OF INJUSTICE,
TO UNDO THE STRAPS OF THE YOKE, TO LET THE OPPRESSED GO FREE,
AND TO BREAK EVERY YOKE?** Isaiah 58:6



INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

USPG organised its triennial International Consultation in Manila, Philippines, from 6th to 13th February 2026. This brought together 40 archbishops, primates, bishops, theologians and church leaders from 31 countries across the Anglican Communion for fellowship, reflection and shared learning. The consultation was hosted by the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) and the Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP).

The International Consultation serves as a space for strengthening relationships across the Anglican Communion and for collective theological reflection. The theme “To Break the Chains of Injustice: Reimagining Missional Theologies Today” (Isaiah 58:6), invited delegates to explore what it means for the church to embody God’s just future in a world that is still shaped by the legacies of past and present ‘empires’. Guided by USPG’s mission priorities of rethinking mission, energising the church and championing justice, the consultation aimed to reimagine mission theology with a focus on confronting the injustices that mark our world.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the consultation was to create a space in which delegates could engage deeply with the legacies of the past, both painful and joyful, the challenges of the present and the promise of the future. The consultation aimed to support a process of reflection on the Anglican Church’s colonial history and its continuing influence on current liturgy and theology and to explore how these legacies might be addressed in genuinely transformative ways.

STRUCTURE AND OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME

The programme was structured around 3 interconnected sub-themes: language, land and legacy.

LANGUAGE

Examined how the use of local languages, Bible translation and indigenised liturgies can resist colonial legacies and enable communities to worship and proclaim the gospel in ways that reflect their own cultures and identities.

LAND

Explored the justice implications of land dispossession, extractive economies and environmental degradation, highlighting how mission theology can support the stewardship of creation and protection of Indigenous communities.

LEGACY

Focused on confronting the historical entanglements of the church with colonialism and slavery and explored how acknowledging past injustices can open pathways towards reparative action, reconciliation and renewal.



The programme began with an opening Eucharist, led by the Most Revd Nestor Poltic, Prime Bishop of ECP and with the Most Revd Joel Porlares, Obispo Máximo of IFI, as preacher. One of the key moments during the Eucharist was the reflection honouring the Rt Revd Alberto Ramento, Bishop of Tarlac and former Obispo Máximo of IFI, known for his solidarity with the poor and peasants. The reflection emphasised that the land belongs to God and called the Church to stand with communities facing injustices. Following this, there was a moment of silence in remembrance of Bishop Ramento and all who have suffered and died in struggles for justice. This was followed by an opening ceremony that included welcome remarks, messages of solidarity, Ambahan (an Indigenous prayer) and cultural presentations by students from St Andrew's Theological Seminary (ECP) and Aglipay Central Theological Seminary (IFI).

Each thematic day began with worship and Bible study, followed by six presentations from the delegates on the sub-themes offering perspectives from their own ecclesial and social contexts. Each day concluded with a discussion and reflection session. Alongside these sessions, delegates had opportunities to explore Manila and engage with its history and culture. The opening days included visits to the National Museum and a walking tour of Intramuros - the historic walled area in Manila - as well as worship in local parishes.

There was also a full day of immersion visits which enabled delegates to engage directly with programmes implemented

by IFI and ECP. Delegates witnessed grassroots programmes addressing poverty, human rights, environmental justice and community resilience. The consultation embraced cultural diversity, which was reflected in the opening ceremony and in worship. These services drew on the varied liturgical traditions, music, language and leadership represented across the Anglican Communion.

“THE PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION WAS TO CREATE A SPACE IN WHICH DELEGATES COULD ENGAGE DEEPLY WITH THE LEGACIES OF THE PAST, BOTH PAINFUL AND JOYFUL, THE CHALLENGES OF THE PRESENT AND THE PROMISE OF THE FUTURE.”



LANGUAGE

The first day highlighted the importance of language within the Anglican Communion, particularly in contexts where English has often been assumed as central to Anglican identity. The delegates explored how translation of the Bible, use of local languages and adaptation of liturgy to local cultures have shaped authentic expressions of faith and have contributed to the decolonisation of Christianity across different regions of the Communion.

The day commenced with a Eucharist led by The Most Revd Onesimus Dongsin Park, Primate of the Anglican Church of Korea and Bishop of the Diocese of Busan, followed by a biblical reflection and panel discussions.

BIBLE STUDY ON LANGUAGE, PRAXIS, BELONGING: A NATIVE MEANDERING

The biblical reflection was led by Prof Jione Havea, Professor at United Theological College, Sydney. Prof Havea presented on language as more than a tool for communication, emphasising that it is deeply intertwined with praxis, belonging and resistance. He highlighted its capacity both to heal and harm, particularly in the context of colonisation and Indigenous people.

Referencing Genesis 1 and 2, Prof Havea introduced the concept of fonua (earth) as a co-creator alongside mana (sacred power/energy) and tapu (sacredness/wholeness). He noted that humans are portrayed as images of both God and the earth, challenging the traditional interpretations of creatio ex nihilo (creation from nothing) and notions of human exceptionalism. Key points from the reflection included:

- God's creative words in Genesis 1 were interpreted as being in the imperfect tense, suggesting they were appeals and invitations rather than forceful commands.
- God's words invited the mana of fonua, the earth's constituents and energies, to partner in creation: "let light be, let the waters gather, let earth bring forth and let us make", respecting the tapu and mana of fonua.
- Earth was "rich with tapu and mana" and was a co-creator with God in Genesis 1-2, rather than terra nullius (an empty land/nobody's land).
- Life emerged through the intersection of mana and tapu of both God and fonua.

- Before God sent rain, a mist rose from earth, not from above, and watered the ground, illustrating that sometimes answers come from below and from among us, rather than solely from above.
- Ha'am (humanity) was formed from the dust of adamah (earth), meaning that the earth provided the essential elements for creating humanity.
- Earth's action of releasing mist from below was described as a "language that speaks through action".
- God understood earth's language and responded by taking dust, moulding it and breathing spirit, wind and moisture into it.

Prof Havea critiqued colonial missions and contextual theology for treating local settings as empty spaces to be filled, emphasising that they already possess their own content, mana, and language. He also linked this theological framework to climate change, stating that the current human practices reflect a failure to live faithfully as images of both God and earth. He also criticised colonial thinking, including the terra nullius principle in missionary approaches that viewed new lands as empty and dark and which was used to justify the colonisation of Australia (the principle part of the Doctrine of Discovery was used extensively in the Americas prior to the colonisation of Australia). He emphasised that although the Bible aims to help people belong, it has often been misused to displace people. Prof Havea concluded by challenging the delegates to move beyond language into action, to address displacement, belonging, ecological justice and acknowledge the earth's role in creation.

CASE STUDIES FROM SRI LANKA AND MEXICO

This session explored two key areas: how local churches in Sri Lanka engage with languages within their context and what this means for the Church in Mexico where English is the predominant language.

Presentations were given by the Rt Revd Dushantha Rodrigo, Bishop of the Diocese of Colombo and the Rt Revd Sally Hernández García, Bishop of the Diocese of Mexico, respectively. The presentations were followed by discussions, with Prof Havea joining the panel speakers. The session was chaired by the Revd Cathrine Ngangira, USPG Trustee.

TWO LANGUAGES, ONE COUNTRY

Bishop Rodrigo discussed language as a vulnerable yet powerful aspect of culture and identity, specifically focusing on how local churches engage missionally with language in their contexts. He presented on the complex linguistic history in Sri Lanka, stating that "language is a gift, heartbeat and a groan". He further explained how the country's two main languages, Sinhala and Tamil, have functioned both as a cause of deep division and as a potential pathway to reconciliation.

Under British rule, English functioned as the official language, but in 1956 the Sinhala Only Act replaced English with Sinhala as the sole official language of the state. Tamil was excluded, despite a prophetic warning at the time that "two languages will have one country, or one language will have two countries". This policy decision triggered decades of riots and ethnic conflicts, with nearly 150 Tamil people killed in 1956 alone. Tamil was not recognised as an official language until 1978, after prolonged agitation and many deaths.



Proto-Dravidian (Tamil)



Sinhala Sanskrit



Bishop Dushantha highlighted the Church of Ceylon's long-standing engagement with language through a commitment to indigenisation. He emphasised the difference between indigenisation and translation, stating that translation involves

transferring existing English texts and hymns into Sinhala/Tamil, often retaining the foreign musical forms and theological expressions. Whereas indigenisation refers to “speaking in the idiom of the people”, creating original liturgical and theological material that emerges from local cultures and languages, thus allowing communities to express the gospel “authentically” rather than through borrowed forms.

Indigenisation of mission in Sri Lanka was pioneered by Bishop James Chapman in 1845. He recognised that Christianity would not thrive in Sri Lanka, unless the gospel was communicated in local languages and cultural frameworks. This continued process of indigenisation has led to the development of trilingual liturgies, in Sinhala, Tamil and English, allowing different language speakers to worship together.

Bishop Rodrigo concluded by stating that the Anglican Church positions itself as the only community in Sri Lanka bringing Tamil and Sinhala speakers together for worship and work, making reconciliation through language a “sacred task” for fulfilling Christ’s work in Sri Lanka.

ENGLISH AS THE PREDOMINANT LANGUAGE IN THE CHURCH OF MEXICO

Bishop Hernández García examined what it meant for the Anglican Church to operate within the Mexican context, especially within a Communion where English is the predominant language. Bishop Hernández García described language as central to the evolution of human communication, moving from sounds and gestures to speech and writing, which has been shaped by the human need to record knowledge, transmit lived experience and preserve memory across generations.

Modern Mexico is home to about 70 Indigenous groups, each with their own language, many of which have survived more than 500 years of colonisation. Even though Spanish is the official language and facilitates access to education, healthcare and social services, Indigenous communities have retained their languages and cultural identities. Indigenous

communities such as the Maya and Aztec practise ancestral faiths which are often centred on polytheistic beliefs and rituals connected to fertility, rain, harvest and strength.

Colonisation introduced a new language and a monotheistic faith, which reshaped the belief systems. However, Bishop Sally pointed out that inculturation, referring to the deliberate process of expressing the Christian message within local cultures while preserving its essential meaning, has taken place. She stated that the use of English within the Anglican Communion has limited the accessibility/participation for many churches, as only those proficient in English are able to engage fully in the Communion. English-speaking parishes in Mexico have often sought foreign clergy, usually from the Episcopal Church or the Church of England. These parishes are now encouraged to celebrate the Eucharist in Spanish or bilingually, ensuring greater integration with the Spanish-speaking communities.

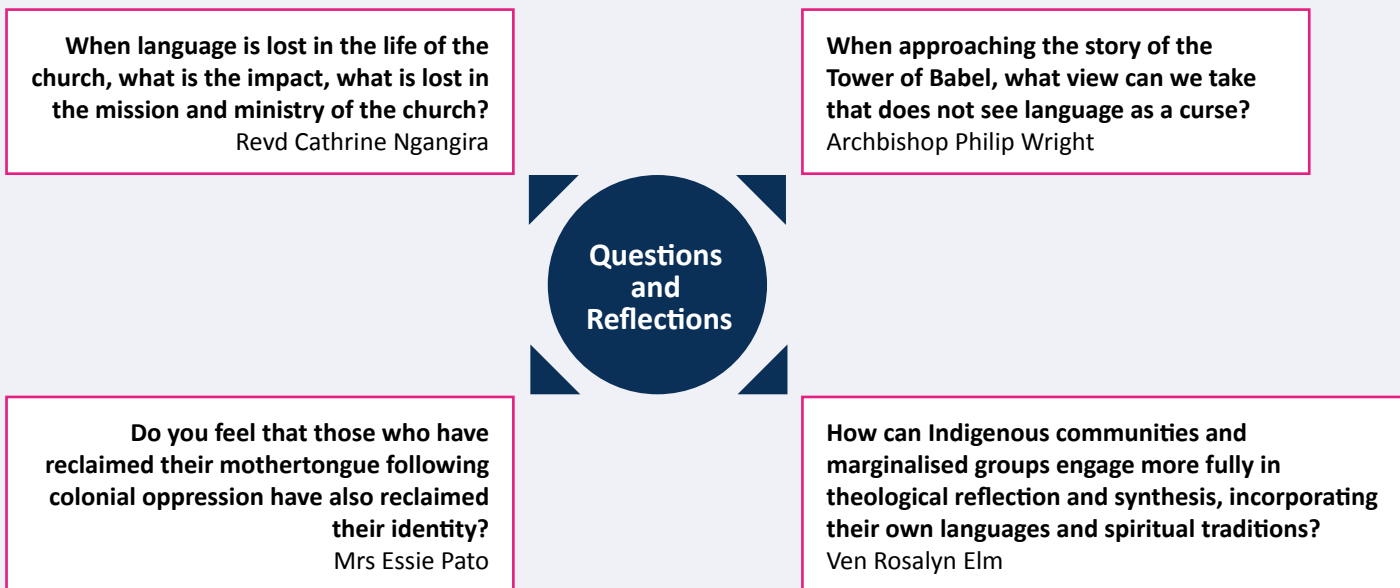
Bishop Hernández García reflected on the church’s adoption of the 1979 U.S. Book of Common Prayer in Spanish translation. She described the book as a “colonising element”. However, she noted that it has also served as a key means of unity and identity, shaping theology and liturgy. Alongside the use of the Book of Common Prayer, the church has incorporated practices from local traditions and celebrations, such as the Día de los Fieles Difuntos (Day of the Faithful Departed).

Bishop Hernández García concluded by pointing out decolonisation as an ongoing process within the Anglican Church of Mexico. She described how the church is consciously distancing itself from the religious language and theological frameworks of the dominant Roman Catholic tradition, and instead is adopting a language of reconciliation, human dignity, diversity, inclusion, forgiveness and renewal. She emphasised that the church’s mission is rooted in listening and walking alongside others with love rather than prejudice.



DISCUSSIONS AND REFLECTIONS ON LANGUAGE (1)

Questions from the delegates during the Q&A session on language.



During the Q&A sessions, the panellists highlighted that language is central to the church's mission, identity and pastoral care. Bishop Hernández García mentioned that in Mexico, the church's mission focuses on "using simple language that respects people's dignity and opens the church's doors for them", portraying that the way language is used matters more than the language spoken.

Bishop Rodrigo, while referring to the context in Sri Lanka, stated that without multilingual engagement, the church "would have lost its common humanity" and would not have been able to unite the Sinhala and Tamil communities or offer hope to those affected by the conflict.

Prof Havea observed that while a language may be lost, "there is a difference between being lost and being dead," showing that reclamation is possible but could create tensions over authenticity.

The discussion also explored contextualising language in worship and theology. Bishop Hernández García shared that using culturally relevant words, such as "tortilla and pulque" in place of "bread and wine", allows the church to communicate the gospel meaningfully to Indigenous communities. Bishop Rodrigo added that "Indigenous communities have something to offer theology", emphasising that the church should learn from local traditions.

Prof Havea reflected on a biblical interpretation, particularly referring to the story of the Tower of Babel, stating that the Bible "is not closed" and that language diversity is a blessing, not a curse, encouraging the church to read scripture critically and uncover hidden colonial assumptions.

CASE STUDIES FROM SOUTH INDIA, SOUTH AFRICA, EL SALVADOR AND THE PHILIPPINES

This session continued by exploring language in different contexts. Presentations were given by the Rt Revd K. Reuben Mark, Moderator of the Church of South India (CSI); the Rt Revd Stephen Diseko, Bishop of the Diocese of Matlosane; and the Most Revd Juan Melgar, Primate of Iglesia Anglicana de la Region Central de America and Bishop of El Salvador. The panel session was chaired by the Very Revd Gloria Mapangdol, Dean and President of St. Andrew's Theological Seminary.

USING 'MARKET LANGUAGE' IN THE CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA

Moderator Mark presented on language in the Indian context, highlighting the diversity and growing crisis of language loss. India, the most populous country in the world, has 22 official languages and more than 1,500 other languages; however, over 220 languages have disappeared

TO THESE PEOPLE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LANGUAGE, WHAT IS THE ANSWER FROM THE CHURCH? WHAT KIND OF INJUSTICE HAS BEEN DONE TO THESE PEOPLE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LANGUAGE?

I HAVE A MOTHER, BUT I HAVE NO MOTHER TONGUE.

in the past 50 years. He raised some questions for the church: “To these people who have lost their language, what is the answer from the church? What kind of injustice has been done to these people who have lost their language?”. He emphasised the severity of the crisis and repeated the phrase he heard from affected communities: “I have a mother, but I have no mother tongue”.

He proceeded by describing the systemic replacement of local-language schools with English-speaking schools. Stating that, as local-language schools are closed, children are forced to learn in a language unfamiliar to them, thus leading to language suppression. In some cases, students were punished for speaking their mother tongue, which stifled creativity and caused lasting trauma. He mentioned that English has increasingly become a preferred language and is now recognised as a symbol of social status.

Moderator Mark also reflected on the response of CSI. He mentioned that the church honours all major languages across South India’s five states, has translated liturgies into local languages and conducts workshops and seminars in local languages. Through the missionary work of the church, the Bible has been made widely available in local languages, and the church continues to address oppressive terminology within its liturgies. He stated that the Bible has recently been completely translated into Banjara language, after the first conversion in that community since 1912.

Moderator Mark emphasised using every day accessible language in worship rather than elite or exclusionary terminology. “Before you want to preach, go to a market and keep listening to all the conversations going on. And bring that kind of language to the pulpit, ‘a market language’ that

people would be able to understand very clearly”. He stressed that liturgy must be meaningful for all people, especially people who find traditional religious language alienating and disconnected from their daily lives. He concluded by saying: “It’s our responsibility to keep our language alive, let us not allow it to be killed”.

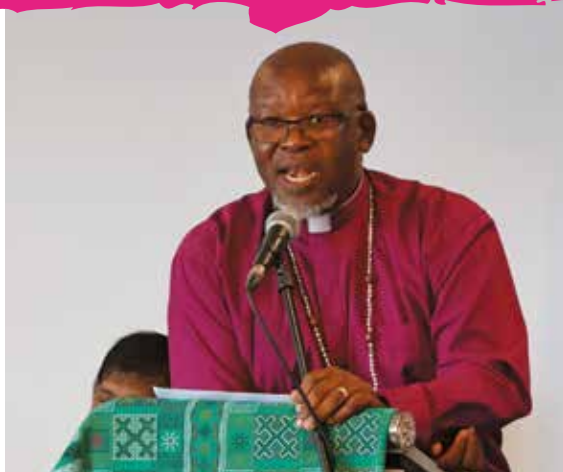
MOVING AWAY FROM COLONIAL PRACTICES, FOREIGN LITURGIES AND LANGUAGES

Bishop Stephen discussed language challenges in the South African context, recounting the deep links between language and oppression under apartheid. He explained that Afrikaans was imposed as the dominant language and recalled the 1976 Soweto uprising, when students resisted being taught in Afrikaans, which they described as “the language of the oppressor”. Many lost their lives during these protests. Today, South Africa recognises 12 official languages; however, English has become the main language used in government, parliament and church meetings, thus perpetuating the perception that Indigenous languages are inferior to colonial ones.

He also pointed out how some missionary practices contributed to language and cultural erasure, including the renaming of people and dismissal of Indigenous spiritual knowledge/practices. He stated that when missionaries went to South Africa, they acted as if “the Indigenous South African people did not have a religion” and “did not know God”. Due to this, many South Africans were given new names during baptism because the priests “could not pronounce the African names”. He also explained that when missionaries discovered South Africans communicated with God through ancestors and their local languages, they were told “it’s a sin”. However, Bishop Stephen also highlighted how a missionary, Robert Moffat, recognised the importance of language and showed respect for the Indigenous communities. From 1820 to 1857, Robert Moffat translated the Bible into Setswana, which Bishop Stephen said gave local communities “power, pride and ownership”.



The Anglican Prayer Book used by the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, published in 1989. Translated into Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa, and Tswana.



Bishop Diseko spoke about the disconnection felt by the youth and Indigenous people within the Anglican Church. An example he gave was the hymns sung during worship, stating that they are not homemade and “do not speak to them”. He mentioned that the youth desire for hymns/songs composed from the local context, lifestyles and history.

Bishop Diseko emphasised the need for contextual liturgy, stating that even translated texts often remain culturally “imported”. He shared that the Anglican Church of Southern Africa is currently reviewing and revising its liturgy, which includes the ongoing development of a new prayer book titled “Under Southern Skies” which will incorporate local histories, languages and realities. Looking at stories of the Tower of Babel and Pentecost, and Paul’s approach to ministry in 1 Corinthians 9:22, he concluded that language diversity should be seen as a gift, rather than a curse and encouraged the Anglican Church to move away from colonial practices that impose foreign liturgies and languages.

TRANSFORMING LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY FROM DIVISION INTO PENTECOSTAL UNITY

Archbishop Melgar discussed language, mission and power in the Latin American context. He described colonisation as

a form of “Pentecost in reverse”, explaining that since the invasion in 1492, Spanish was imposed as the only language, thus erasing diverse ancestral tongues/languages. He stated that this has caused “psychological and epistemic violence that persists until today”. He pointed out that English has now replaced Spanish as a language of trade and faith and could be seen as a “badge of prestige”; a mark of status that is used to oppress and silence people.

Archbishop Melgar highlighted the context in Latin America, particularly in Nicaragua, where the government has removed the Episcopal Church’s legal status, restricted Christian expression, closed universities and expelled clergy. He stressed that a church which fails to speak the truth to powerholders/the government could be seen as “ignoring the cross”. While referencing Isaiah 58 and Luke 4, he also emphasised that evangelism should not be only a verbal proclamation but a participatory action that intends to reveal God’s justice.

Using the theological framework of the “4 vias of theology of creation” (positive, negative, creative and transformative pathways) he outlined the vision for the Anglican Church of Central America. This included:

VIA POSITIVA

- A) Celebrating & recognising the gifts of indigenous languages.

VIA NEGATIVA

- A) Acts of repentance;
- B) Naming historical practices of language oppression.
- C) Decolonising materials that perpetuate colonial hierarchies.

VIA CREATIVA

- A) Reimagining liturgies or creating liturgies that come from the people.
- B) Developing bilingual/trilingual songs & poetry that respect local languages, metaphors and idioms.

VIA TRANSFORMATIVA

- A) Restorative justice: ensuring 30-50% of worship services are in indigenous languages.
- B) Creating a budget specifically for linguistic revitalisation, local languages, metaphors and idioms.

Archbishop Melgar concluded by stating that the vision for the Iglesia Anglicana de la Region Central de America is to transform linguistic diversity from division into a Pentecostal unity that restores dignity to all the people.

DISCUSSION TIME

The discussion session focused on the lasting impact of unjust missionary paradigms and the deep connection between language, identity and dignity. Archbishop The Most Revd Dr Maimbo Mndolwa, Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Tanzania and Bishop of Tanga, shared a personal story of how missionary practices distorted Indigenous identities through the rejection of African names at baptism, asking how such damage can now be undone. In response, Bishop Diseko acknowledged that harm has been done but stressed the responsibility to ensure it is not repeated, sharing how post-apartheid South Africa enabled people to reclaim and reorder their names. Moderator Mark added to that, saying in India, the church now baptises adults using their original names, allowing indigenous identity to become part of their Christian witness.

The discussions ended with group discussions led by the Revd Canon Dr Peniel Rajkumar, Theologian and Director of Global Mission at USPG. Using the four pathways framework, the delegates were asked to reflect on the following questions:

1. VIA POSITIVA:

How has language aided Christian witness in your context?

2. VIA NEGATIVA:

How has language proved harmful for Christian witness?

3. VIA CREATIVA:

How can you see language being creatively used for Christian witness?

4. VIA TRANSFORMATIVA:

How can language become a means of justice in your context?

The Revd Canon Dr Peniel framed this methodology as acquiring a “Pentecost of the ears”, learning to listen to what has not been heard, listening to silences and suppressed speech. The Revd Canon Dr Peniel emphasised this as creating a new ethos, where the church becomes a community that listens with many ears, not just one that speaks in many tongues.





LAND

Presentations and discussions focused on the significance that land holds for the self-understanding of many Indigenous communities, as well as the ongoing struggles of many communities to protect land as a gift from God, the creator of both people and planet.

The day began with a Eucharist led by the Most Revd Vicente Msosa, Primate of Igreja Anglicana de Moçambique e Angola, followed by a biblical reflection and panel discussions.

BIBLE STUDY: THE LAND IS GOD'S

The Very Revd Gloria Mapangdol, Dean and President of St. Andrew's Theological Seminary in the Philippines, discussed land and justice through the lens of Indigenous people in the Philippines.

She began her presentation by explaining the context in the Philippines. She mentioned that there are about 17 million Indigenous people from 185 ethno-linguistic groups, comprising 12% of the population. While some regions, such as the Cordilleras, resisted Spanish colonisation and preserved communal land stewardship for longer, colonial rule eventually introduced private land ownership. The Spanish and later American systems turned land into a

commodity, which enabled wealthy families to accumulate haciendas (estates), while the Indigenous communities were pushed into poverty. Today, despite laws like the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act, violations persist and Indigenous people remain among the poorest and most marginalised.

Referencing Leviticus 25, the Very Revd Mapangdol emphasised the core theological principle that "the land belongs to God and therefore should not be sold". Land is both a gift and promise from God and He has called human beings to be stewards rather than owners. She mentioned that the Jubilee law was meant to prevent the permanent loss of land, accumulation of wealth by the rich and exploitation of the poor. Although these laws were not fully implemented in ancient Israel, they represent God's vision of justice and restoration.

She then moved on to discuss the "economics of enough" as an expression of God's justice. Using the manna story in Exodus, she stated that hoarding is an act of injustice as it deprives others of their necessities. She mentioned that the same principle applies directly to land today, specifically with regards to practices such as land grabbing and illegal mining.

The Very Revd Mapangdol also discussed “the importance of rest as resistance”, while referring to the Sabbath and Jubilee law as practices that resist endless production and consumption.

Importantly, she shared Indigenous practices from northern Philippines (the Cordilleras region) that embody the Sabbath and Jubilee law values:

- Ubaya: a rest day declared by the community before or after harvest season for the people and land. Entry paths to fields are marked by pudong (knotted leaves) which signal the rest days.
- Gawat: a practice of communal land-sharing, where land could temporarily be given to those in need, such as newly married couples, and returned when it is no longer required. The Very Revd Mapangdola mentioned that this



Pudong (knotted leaves) symbolise rest days.

value has been applied by the Episcopal Church in the Philippines, which gave portions of acquired property in Leyte and Capiz to “landless families” who paid it back slowly at their own pace.

Gloria also addressed the issue of large-scale mining on Indigenous lands in the Philippines. She stated that small-scale mining by the Indigenous people is governed by communal rules that minimise damage; however, large-scale mining in Indigenous lands is driven by profit and has led to environmental devastation and displacement.

She concluded by emphasising that the Jubilee law is not only applicable to ancient Israel but remains relevant today as a call to practise fairness, ensure rest for people and land and embrace the principle of the “economics of enough”.

CASE STUDIES FROM BRAZIL, MELANESIA AND THE HOLY LAND

Presentations were given by the Most Revd Marinez Bassotto, Primate of Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil; the Most Revd Leonard Dawea, Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Melanesia; and the Revd Canon Wadie Far, Priest at St. George’s Cathedral in Jerusalem. The presentations were followed by discussions, chaired by Ms Rosie Dawson, USPG Trustee.

AMAZONIA

Archbishop Bassotto spoke about the ecological, theological and political realities of the Amazon. She began by discussing a bill called “PL da Devastação” (Bill of Devastation),



Rivers in the Amazon rainforest are at historically low levels.

which weakens Brazil's national environmental licensing standards. Despite opposition from environmentalists and civil societies, the bill was approved, setting Brazilian environmental policy back by decades.

Moving on to forest preservation, she mentioned that although deforestation has declined over the past 3 years, forest degradation has increased six-fold in 2024, reaching 36,379 km², the highest in 15 years which has brought the Amazon closer to a point of no return. She explained that deforestation and degradation have affected the forest's ability to regulate global climate and water systems. The destruction of the Amazon forest contributes directly to water scarcity/droughts, food insecurity and global warming even beyond South America.

Archbishop Bassotto referenced Prof Havea's biblical reflection/presentation, where he referred to the earth as a co-creator and highlighted that humans were formed from adamah. She expanded on this narrative, by stating that humans carry "the mark of earth" and are "earth that walks, thinks and loves". She emphasised that our affiliation with imago Dei (the divine image) does not negate our affiliation with the earth or make humans superior to the earth.

She mentioned that "colonial theologies" and traditional Western theologies have promoted the idea that humans are separate from nature and the rest of creation. This perspective has created a hierarchical and gendered worldview that placed humans in dominance over creation; "as if we were celestial beings trapped in material bodies". She rejected the idea that humans are somehow fundamentally different or above other living things. Instead, she saw humans as just one part of a larger, connected world. In her view, all life is linked together in a kind of sacred network, where nothing stands outside or above the rest.

For Amazonian people, the forest is not a resource to be exploited but a living partner and territory, described in Guarani as tekoha (the place of being). The land is seen as an extension of the body, culture and identity. Archbishop Bassotto concluded by calling the church to "rewire its mind and perception" toward land, the forest, Indigenous communities and humans.

LAND AND IDENTITY IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

Archbishop Dawea presented a deep contextual reflection on land, identity and justice in the Solomon Islands. He began his presentation by providing background on the Church of Melanesia and the Solomon Islands. He described the Pacific as a "fluid continent", where there is more water than land. Most islands are small and low-lying, only slightly above sea level, and while many small islands and atolls are uninhabited, they are still owned by tribes or individual families. Every child born is connected to land through familial/tribal lineage and over 80% of land remains under customary ownership. He stated that land is inseparable



from identity: "Land is identity. It is a sense of spirituality, power and wealth. It is the essence of being and becoming".

Archbishop Dawea highlighted how this sacred relationship with land has been disrupted by colonial legacies and ongoing foreign exploitation. He traced unresolved land alienation back to the coconut plantation operations during the colonial period. He mentioned that the Lever Pacific Plantation Limited arrived in the Solomon Islands in 1902 and by 1905, had cheaply and permanently acquired more than 80,000 acres across 14 islands. Although the traders/plantations contributed significantly to the local economy through copra (dried coconut) production into the 21st century, the alienated lands were never legally settled or returned to the original inhabitants, which has created ongoing conflicts between displaced labourers' descendants and the original inhabitants.

Today, similar patterns persist in the Solomon Islands with the foreign investors, particularly through logging and mining operations, which are often facilitated through bribery. Landowners receive as little as 15% of export returns while bearing the social and environmental costs. He stated that, the "motherland is becoming the cause of their displacement", highlighting the irony that ancestral land now drives dispossession rather than security. He further explained how land exploitation has led to severe social crisis, including tribal conflict, displacement, teenage pregnancy, trafficking, drug misuse and long-term ecological damage. He mentioned that land "is the essence of peace and harmony that can also become causes of conflict and division in the Solomon Islands".

Archbishop Dawea also discussed the church's response. From 1999 to 2003, ethnic tensions erupted due to unresolved alienated land issues. In that period, the government administration and legal systems had also

collapsed and as a result, the Anglican Church of Melanesia stepped forward to mediate peace and negotiate settlements which led to the martyrdom of seven Melanesian brothers. The church continues its mission through advocacy against logging and mining activities, empowering local “green apostles” to monitor environmental changes and peacebuilding grounded in the five marks of mission. He concluded by advising the church to step up its missionary engagement from just “doing mission” to addressing impacts through policy advocacy and amendments to land ownership and rights legislation.

COMPLEXITIES AROUND LAND AND IDENTITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Fr Far presented on how identity is shaped by land. He began by explaining his personal identity and connection to his land by saying, he identifies himself first as a Christian, then as an Arab and specifically as someone from the land now called the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. He pointed out that this connection to the land is universal, rooted in birthplace, ancestry and daily life, stating, “we are all connected to the lands on which we were born... whether we want to admit it or not”. However, he pointed out that Palestinian identity is not uniform. In places like the West Bank, most people identify primarily as Palestinian, whereas in the Galilee identity is more layered, with many citizens identifying as both Arab and Palestinian.

Fr Far described the impact of the war in Gaza and its wider effects across Jerusalem, the West Bank and neighbouring countries. He spoke about homes being destroyed,

livelihoods lost, hunger, displacement and constant uncertainty. He highlighted recent developments around border crossings and passport stamps as examples of ongoing attempts to deny Palestinian connection to land and identity. He also pointed out that the biblical claim of “the promise of land”, depicted “a land without a people for a people without a land”. He emphasised this was a false claim as people lived there then and continue to live there now.

Fr Far went on to describe the daily insecurity faced by Palestinians, particularly movement restrictions. He spoke about checkpoints, gates and unsafe roads that make even short journeys unpredictable and dangerous. He mentioned that, as a younger adult in Jordan, he could safely drive an hour to another city at midnight without concern. However, as an adult in Palestine, he would not dare to make such a drive because “you never know what’s going to happen all the way, you never know if the road is going to be safe or not”. He also explained the difficulty of obtaining permits and visas, explaining why diocesan meetings are often held outside Jerusalem or in Jordan, as access is denied to clergy/old parishioners from the West Bank, Lebanon and Syria.

He discussed several aspects of settler violence and Israeli control over West Bank. A few of the examples he mentioned were:

- Settlers had attacked one of the main water sources for Palestinians in the north of the West Bank, destroyed the water pumps which has left many villages and cities without water;
- The city of Taybeh, one of the few completely Christian cities in the West Bank, is regularly attacked by settlers who try to burn down the ancient church and stop people from reaching their fields, caring for their flocks or harvesting olive trees;
- During the last harvest, many olive trees, the main source of living for many Palestinians, were not harvested because of settler attacks that prevented Palestinians from accessing their trees, leading to economic hardship.

Fr Far concluded by reflecting on how people continue to live amid all the challenges. Some choose to stay, resisting displacement simply by remaining on their land while others feel compelled to leave in search of safety and a future for their children. He mentioned that he used to urge people to stay, saying, “we are the Christians of this land, we need to stay. If we leave, what are we leaving these lands for?”; however, he admitted, “I can’t find the strength to say that anymore”, when parents speak of their children’s futures. He ended by acknowledging both the blessing and burden of being “living stones” in the Holy Land.



DISCUSSIONS AND REFLECTIONS ON LAND

During the discussion the Revd Canon Dr Duncan Dormor, General Secretary of USPG, called for the urgent need for a theology of land to be developed within the Anglican Communion. He pointed out that this task may be challenging for European and North American churches; however, it could emerge powerfully from voices in the room.

Responding to the question, “how much has the church been infected with the colonial mindset and how is it freeing itself?”, Archbishop Martinez explained the church’s ongoing process of unlearning colonial mindsets by walking alongside Indigenous people, learning from ancestral wisdom and working together, rather than seeking conversion.

In response to the question, “are the Amazonians and Indigenous people seen as part of the problem, or just as victims of colonial destruction?”, she acknowledged that while some Indigenous communities have been drawn into destructive economic systems, ancestral people remain key to reshaping humanity’s relationship with creation. She also expressed the desire to build a decolonial theology of land from Indigenous people worldwide, not just from the Amazon.

Responding to a question about settlers and land, Fr Far explained that settlers claim land as a biblical inheritance and that current political agendas centre on the West Bank as the heart of those claims.

CASE STUDIES FROM CANADA, SCOTLAND AND THE PHILIPPINES

Presentations were given by the Ven Rosalyn Elm, Director of Indigenous Ministries for the Anglican Church of Canada; the Most Revd Mark Strange, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church and Bishop of Moray, Ross & Caithness; and Dr Mariefe Ibarra Revollido, Iglesia Filipina Independiente. This session was chaired by the Revd Cathrine Ngangira, USPG Trustee.

LAND AS A GIFT FROM GOD

The Ven Rosalyn began her presentation by explaining that in Oneida, *ohwatsya* (land) signifies abundance and relationship with creation. She emphasised that her worldview, grounded in Oneida language and creation stories, views the land and its resources as gifts that people are entrusted to care for responsibly in relationship with each other for the next seven generations. She then referred to the *Guswenta* (Two-Row Wampum), a 1613 treaty that set out principles of sharing land and resources through interdependence, peace and unity, offering a vision of coexistence rather than domination.

She moved on to explain the “Turtle Island”, which is the Indigenous name for North America as it looks like a turtle. She briefly explained the Oneida creation story of Turtle Island, stating that earth was built upon a turtle’s back by the animals of the waters and that land was formed through the cooperation of animals and the care of Sky Woman.



The Ven Rosalyn highlighted the role that legislative genocide, land grabbing and civilisation acts played. She explained that legislative genocide refers to the use of law, policy and theological understandings to destroy people through forced land dispossession, removal of children from families/communities and erasure of language, kinship and spiritual practices. When Canada became a country under Sir John A. Macdonald, he created the Civilisation Act to move all Indigenous people toward becoming “civilised”. This would happen when they decided to go to school or become doctors, lawyers or teachers, at which point they would become “enfranchised”, become part of Canada and leave their indigeneity behind. She referred to a painting by R.G. Miller, a residential school survivor, to illustrate this difficult reality.



Postcard by R.G. Miller, who was forcibly taken from his home as a child and taken to the Mohawk Institute Residential School in Ontario, Canada, where he was there for 11 years.

The Civilisation Act later became the Indian Act in 1864, which confined Indigenous people to reserves. While 89% of Canada is under treaty or unceded lands, the Indian Act resulted in 1 million Indigenous people now occupying only 0.05% of the country. She mentioned that the churches played a role in providing moral and theological justification for this dispossession. She highlighted several land issues Indigenous people in Canada face which included: conflicts over resource extraction (mining, oil and gas), subsurface rights and unresolved claims on unceded territories. She pointed out how English legal concepts of land ownership clash with Indigenous understandings of land as an indivisible whole.

Today, the Anglican Church of Canada is working toward self-determination through the concept of “generative belonging”, which calls the church to walk together with Indigenous people to create something new, while challenging ingrained notions of land ownership as “the right to refuse”.

THE LAND OF THE HIGHLANDERS

Primus Mark began his presentation with an overview of the Scottish Highlands. He described the Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness as an area roughly the size of Belgium, but home to only 230,000 people. He described Scotland as a very sparsely populated area, a place shaped by layered languages (Gaelic, Scots and English) and with a history of exclusion. He explained how the Scottish Episcopal Church emerged after 1689 and endured persecution following the Battle of Culloden, when Highland culture and language were deliberately suppressed. He concluded by saying that the Scottish Episcopal Church is the last surviving part of an older northern church tradition that refused to accept the changes of that period and remained separate from the established church.

Primus Mark explained the emptiness of the Highlands and centuries of land dispossession, particularly during the

“Highland Clearances”, when people were removed from their ancestral lands to make way for sheep and estates owned by the wealthy.

Although communities believed the land was theirs and named the mountains, rivers and seas, these names were erased from official maps. An example he gave was the ‘Ben Nevis’ mountain in Scotland, the anglicised name of the Scottish Gaelic Beinn Nibheis.

Today, around 80% of land in the Scottish Highlands is privately owned by just 300 people. Out of those 300, about 115 have never lived in Scotland. Large tracts of the Highlands are owned by overseas companies and multi-millionaires, while local people are priced out of housing and forced to leave in search of work. Despite measures such as the “right to roam”, land continues to be controlled for sport (shooting game), rewilding or industrial use, leaving communities excluded. Over 80% of young people from Bishop Mark’s diocese do not live in the diocese.

He highlighted the ongoing injustice: declining healthcare access, rising child mortality and declining congregations. He also mentioned that the church is struggling to sustain ministry across vast distances, stating that the diocese can only afford 8 stipendiary priests. In the town of Thurso, nobody in the congregation is still working; they are all retired because “that’s all there is to do”. He described the life there as “living in the 1930s”. Primus Mark emphasised that it has been 400 years of systemic exclusion.

He concluded his presentation saying he hopes that the Highlands would be “filled with Highlanders” once more. He mentioned there are 16 million Scottish diaspora and said: “I don’t want the present residents to become part of that”. The land, he insisted, “does not belong to lairds”, “rich foreigners”, “industrial companies” or “the government”, but “it belongs to the people of the Highlands”.



The Last of the Clan (1865) painting by Thomas Faed, illustrating the Highland Clearances.



IFI MISSION THEOLOGIES

Dr Mariefe presented on the mission of Indigenous people in the Philippines and highlighted the work of IFI. She began by outlining the major challenges and marginalisation faced by over 110 Indigenous ethno-linguistic groups. She mentioned that many Indigenous groups experience red-tagging, discrimination and violation of their human rights by government authorities, high levels of marginalisation, eviction from ancestral lands they have inhabited for generations and have restricted access to education, healthcare and housing. For Indigenous people, development is not profit-driven but rooted in recognising dignity, collective well-being, rights to land and resources.

Dr Mariefe also presented information about IFI, stating that it is a church “born out of the people’s struggle for freedom”. IFI has developed key documents including Statement of Mission, Areas of Mission, Statement of Development that guide church members to embody and practice theology from the margins. She mentioned that IFI is committed to resisting injustice and defending land against global capitalism through prophetic advocacy, anti-mining campaigns and ecumenical partnerships. IFI calls for legal protections for land rights and the recognition of Indigenous land titles, especially for ancestral domains. She also stated that the church supports the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act.

She highlighted 3 approaches to reimagining mission theologies. They were as follows:

a) Reclaiming the land as a divine gift, the earth as *kasama ng bayan* (companion of the people); Filipino spirituality does not see land as an object but calls it *inang kalikasan* (mother earth). Earth is a life giver, sustainer and companion. Ecological and land justice is about the dignity of creation and humanity’s responsibility to act as stewards, recognising that all creatures and ecosystems have intrinsic value.

b) Promoting a theology of creation care rooted in local context; the church draws upon Indigenous knowledge, from traditional farming techniques in harmony with nature to cultural practices honouring the sacredness of the Earth. Genesis shows creation as a community of life, harmony and interdependence. Humanity was placed within creation, not outside it, emphasising the role that we are stewards who nurture, not masters who dominate.

c) Reimagining mission through the lens of justice - rethinking mission as resistance: IFI’s solidarity with the Indigenous communities reimagines mission rooted in justice, peace and the common good. This challenges traditional notions of mission tied to economic exploitation or cultural imposition.



She referenced Leviticus 25, stating that land justice is central to the gospel. She concluded by saying mission today must choose “life over profit, people over power and land over greed”. “The earth is crying, women are crying, the poor are crying, the Indigenous people are crying and God is calling the church to listen. This is ecological justice and this is the gospel”.

DISCUSSIONS AND REFLECTIONS ON LAND (2)

The Revd Canon Dr Peniel chaired the reflections session. He invited the delegates to use the 4 pathways theology framework (positive, negative, creative and transformative) to explore land in different contexts. The Revd Adam Mo from the Diocese of Hong Kong Island, highlighted the growing urban disconnection from land in Hong Kong. He mentioned that crowded urban living has disconnected people from land and there are many circumstances where parents are teaching children that soil and nature are “dirty and dangerous”, leading to generations who rarely touch or have a relationship with the land.

Bishop Samuel Mankhin from The Church of Bangladesh, highlighted the land issues and struggles of Indigenous people in Bangladesh. He explained that although Indigenous people have historically had their own land, it was never formally registered/recorded. As these lands were not formally registered, it has allowed the state to claim ownership, leaving Indigenous people increasingly landless and vulnerable, especially because they are unable to buy back or reclaim their ancestral lands.

The session closed with the metaphor of “travelling shoes”, emphasising that churches should remain agile and responsive to rapidly changing challenges/injustices. The Revd Canon Dr Peniel concluded the session with the concept of “respair”, a fresh hope rooted in reality that allows us to be people who enable recovery from despair.



LEGACY

This day focused on the theme legacy, specifically looking at what the church has inherited and what it is called to become. It began with a Eucharist led by the Rt Revd Alwin Samuel, Bishop of Sialkot, Church of Pakistan, followed by a Bible Study and panel discussions. It concluded with a closing Eucharist led by the Rt Revd Sally Sue Hernández García, Bishop of Mexico, and the Revd Dr Canon Duncan Dormor, General Secretary of USPG, as the preacher.

BIBLE STUDY

The Very Revd Lydia Bucklin began by reading 1 Peter 2:1-10. She pointed out the phrase “you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation...” and highlighted Peter’s original context which was addressing vulnerable and persecuted communities under the Roman rule. She then contrasted how this language was later misused by white settlers in North America. She emphasised that Peter was building up marginalised people by telling them: “those with power and control may tell you that you are nothing, that you are not worthy of mercy, that you are not of people. But you are. In fact, you are chosen”. She explained that the concept of being chosen was not a self-centred understanding that meant to be elite, superior or better than others, but rather to be chosen as beloved children of God, worthy of protection and care.

She then connected this concept to how white settlers in North America interpreted being “chosen people”. Referring to the 1872 painting called American Progress, she showed how white settlers distorted theology to justify genocide and enslavement. In the painting, Native Americans were displaced and shown “fleeing into darkness”. Residential boarding schools forced assimilation; children had their hair



American Progress by John Gast (1872).



cut, clothing stripped, were beaten for speaking their mother tongue and forbidden to practice their religion. Officials justified this by saying “we have to kill the Indian to save the man”. White Christian nationalism wrongly interpreted the scripture to justify this oppression, claiming that “God has chosen us” for American exceptionalism. E.g. the concept of being “chosen people” was used by white settlers to justify the Doctrine of Discovery, which established that Christian nations had superior rights and a moral duty to dominate non-Christian people. “Our country is quite literally built on principles of exploitation, extraction, greed, and exclusion”.

The Very Revd Lydia emphasised that people who have been dehumanised because of their race or differences, are “recognised as God’s own and God’s beloved, brought into the light of justice”. She stated that Peter’s epistle is “an ecclesiological call for how to be the church in the world”. “With Jesus as our cornerstone, Jesus, the one who was rejected and persecuted. Jesus, the one who lived his life poor and humble. We’re reminded that the foundation of the church is not built on power. But on the margins.” She gave an example of Jonathan Daniels, who gave his life protecting Ruby Sales during the U.S. civil rights movement, embodying what it means to be a “living stone” shaped by costly love rather than domination.

Discussing her role as President and Dean of Episcopal Divinity School (EDS), she shared how EDS has reimagined itself as a campus-free, globally accessible seminary shaped by perspectives from the margins. This institutional shift reflects a broader call to dismantle colonial, hierarchical structures in theological education and the church.

She introduced a framework from Visions Inc. that emphasises change must happen at four interconnected levels: personal, interpersonal, institutional, and cultural. She described each person as a “living stone,” where faith goes beyond Sunday worship. She also called for the church to move from being centred around the Church of England or the Episcopal Church towards being a polycentric church that recognises many centres. Lydia concluded her reflection by highlighting how “to be chosen means to belong” and challenged the delegates by asking the following: “what is the legacy we will leave for future generations?”

CASE STUDIES FROM THE PHILIPPINES, TANZANIA, AND THE CARIBBEAN

Presentations were given by the Rt Revd Dindo Ranojo, General Secretary of IFI and Bishop of the Diocese of Tarlac; the Most Revd Maimbo Mndolwa; Archbishop and Primate of the Anglican Church of Tanzania; the Most Revd Philip Wright, Archbishop of the Church in the Province of the West Indies, with the discussion session chaired by Dr Anita Gittens, USPG Trustee.

THE LEGACY OF UNIVERSITIES’ MISSION TO CENTRAL AFRICA (UMCA) IN TANZANIA

Archbishop Mndolwa reflected on the legacy of UMCA, stating that his own Anglican identity was shaped by this tradition and therefore he could not be entirely impartial. UMCA was founded in 1859 in response to David Livingstone’s plea to abolish slavery. Even though the mission made substantial contributions to the life of the church in East and Central Africa, Archbishop Maimbo highlighted that its legacy is deeply mixed.

UMCA was distinctive in devolving authority to bishops in the field rather than governing mission work from Europe. This encouraged strong and sometimes visionary leadership, but it also created conditions for autocratic and abusive practices. Although UMCA pioneered the training and ordination of African priests from early stages, paternalistic attitudes compromised the development of African church leadership and left long-term challenges with racism and power dynamics.

He highlighted the 3 main church traditions in Tanzania. This included: a strong anglo-catholic identity that is rooted in UMCA, an evangelical tradition established by the Church Missionary Society and a charismatic tradition emerging from revival movements. Archbishop Mndolwa also highlighted UMCA’s impact on language and worship in Tanzania. He mentioned that “European missionaries from UMCA were committed to living an African life to build up an African church.” One example he gave was Bishop Steere, a key UMCA figure, who produced the first comprehensive English-Swahili dictionary and translated the Bible and English hymns into Swahili. This contributed to the standardisation of Swahili.



Expanding on the role UMCA played in abolishing slavery, Archbishop Mndolwa pointed out that the missionaries fought against slave caravans, sometimes using money to 'buy' slaves or 'steal' them from farms. They successfully pushed the Sultan of Zanzibar to sign a treaty for the abolition of slavery and slave trade on 6th June 1873. On 5th September 1873, the mission also bought the slave market. The Christ Church Cathedral in Stone Town (Zanzibar) was built on the site of the former notorious slave market, with the altar placed where the main whipping post once stood, "transforming a site which was once for suffering into a centre of liberation."

He concluded by outlining how the Anglican Church of Tanzania is actively engaging with UMCA's legacy today. He mentioned that the church is currently reviewing the history of mission from an African perspective, supporting church growth and evangelisation, and expanding the ordination of women. These efforts are part of an ongoing process of transforming inherited structures and shaping a church that is faithful to the gospel while learning from its past.

THE LEGACY OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN THE WEST INDIES

Archbishop Wright spoke from his context in the Church in the Province of the West Indies and emphasised the interconnectedness between land, language, and legacy, saying "you can't talk about land, about language without having some consideration for the legacy." He then explained the legacy of the Anglican Church in the West Indies, stating that the Anglican Church came to the Caribbean in the 17th century, during the British imperial expansion and plantation society. He mentioned that records suggest that the church's focus was less on missionary work and more about helping to establish English settler culture and institutions.

He stated that in places such as Belize, the early Anglican Church functioned largely as "a chaplaincy to the English settlers," positioning itself closely with colonial authority. Due to this, Anglicanism in the Caribbean "was not simply an observer of slavery and colonialism" but was institutionally complicit in systems that sanctioned racial hierarchy and benefited from enslaved labour. Archbishop Wright highlighted 3 major ramifications of this legacy, which included: how the church is viewed by Caribbean societies; dynamics of trust and distrust; and questions about theological credibility. He pointed out that many still ask, "who is this church to tell us how to think about God?," highlighting the challenge rooted in the church's historical alignment with oppression rather than liberation.

While speaking about the path toward transformation and moving forward with the church's history of complicity in slavery, he also encouraged the church to move beyond empty apologies, stating that there is a need to move "beyond the customary symbolic apologies toward practices of repair that address the concrete legacies of slavery" and are truly emancipating. He also emphasised that "telling the truth" must be "at the heart of this process, not just



“TELLING THE TRUTH” MUST BE “AT THE HEART OF THIS PROCESS, NOT JUST OCCASIONALLY OR CONVENIENTLY, BUT AS A CONSISTENT PRACTICE WITHIN THE CHURCH THAT TRANSFORMS OUR TEACHING, OUR WORSHIP AND OUR INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY.

occasionally or conveniently, but as a consistent practice within the church that transforms our teaching, our worship and our institutional memory." Archbishop Wright spoke about reparative justice, emphasising that its aim is love not retribution. An example he gave was USPG's reconciliation work at Codrington in Barbados, describing it as "an excellent example of how we can move forward, a first step" toward long-term repair.

Archbishop Wright addressed the need for theological renewal, explaining that slavery was sustained not only by economic interests but also by "distorted readings" of the Bible. He referred to the Slave Bible, published in 1807 and used by the British missionaries to convert enslaved people, in which large portions of the text were removed. He stated that this was a distorted theology that sacralised obedience and suppressed liberation. He mentioned that the path forward, for the Anglican Church in the Caribbean, demands patience, humility, and courage, as well as a willingness to listen deeply to voices that have been marginalised for a long time. He concluded by saying, "the church can move from a legacy of complicity toward a future shaped by justice, reconciliation and renewed witness to the liberating gospel."

THE LEGACY OF THE IFI

Bishop Ranojo, presented on the IFI's legacy and shared insights into its' programmatic work. IFI was founded in 1902, in the aftermath of the anti-colonial revolution. It



emerged from the labour movement as a concrete expression of religious freedom at a time when political and socio-economic liberation had not been fully achieved. He stated that from its inception, IFI has always understood itself as a people's church.

Bishop Ranojo described IFI's legacy as "not only a legacy of permission, but a legacy of sacrifice," as he honoured the memory of clergy who were martyred for standing with farmers and workers. He highlighted the church's five pillars of mission: worship, human development, social action, ecumenical life, and renewal/reconciliation as the means through which the IFI seeks to "break the chain of injustice." He explained that this legacy is embodied in IFI's human-rights programmes, support for workers, Indigenous communities, ecological justice programmes, and advocacy against gender-based discrimination. He concluded by emphasising that IFI is a church "not only for the people but with the people."

DISCUSSIONS AND REFLECTIONS ON LEGACY (1)

During the discussions, in response to a question how the churches in the Caribbean are beginning to embrace Bob Marley's legacy, Archbishop Wright shared about the growing recognition of the theological and liberative themes in Bob Marley's songs. He mentioned that there have been signs of change, including the inclusion of Bob Marley's songs in revised hymnals and mentioned that there was recently the celebration of a Bob Marley Mass.

Bishop Jorge Cabral (The Lusitanian Church, Portugal) asked about the political implications of IFI and its relationship with the local government, particularly regarding the pressures and persecution churches face sometimes. Bishop Dindo responded that the church remains open to dialogue and cooperation with the government, especially on environmental and Indigenous issues. However, he pointed out that there are serious risks involved in speaking out against corruption and injustice such as, red-tagging, intimidation, and imprisonment. Despite these dangers, he emphasised that standing in solidarity with the poor and marginalised is integral to IFI's mission and heritage.

Archbishop Cyril Ben-Smith highlighted the legacy of the Anglican Church in Ghana, linking it to the colonial history

and slave castles. The first Anglican church in Cape Coast Castle in Ghana was built directly over the slave dungeon, where "500 people or more" male slaves were held in cramped and poorly ventilated conditions, while church services and worship took place above. He emphasised that the church cannot turn a blind eye to this history.

Dr Anita concluded the session by challenging the delegates to "move from listening to action" and quoted Dr Martin Luther King Jr. saying: "our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

CASE STUDIES FROM THE UK, MALAYSIA, AND THE PHILIPPINES

Presentations were given by the Rt Revd David Walker, Bishop of Manchester; the Rt Revd Danald Jute, Bishop of the Anglican Church in Sarawak and Brunei; Attorney Floyd Lalwet, Provincial Secretary and Legal Counsel for The Episcopal Church in the Philippines, with the discussion session chaired by Ms Rosie Dawson, USPG Trustee.

THE LEGACY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Bishop Walker began his presentation by acknowledging his identity as a "coloniser," recognising this as part of his legacy as a British white man. He structured his presentation around 6 key themes, each beginning with the letter "e," which framed his discussion on the Church of England's role in historical and current social justice issues.

Under "enslavement," Bishop Walker emphasised that Britain did not invent slavery but industrialised it. He explained that the British created the market for enslaved people in Africa, effectively turning slavery into an industrial process. By instigating wars in order to capture people for export to the West Indies and the American colonies, the British systematised and expanded what had previously existed on a different scale.

Looking at "empire," he addressed the backlash against Project Spire, a £100 million project by the Church Commissioners to respond to the church's historical involvement in the slave trade. He suggested that much of the opposition stems from the perception that the project challenges the British identity and pride in empire. As he stated "when you challenge that and say, actually, we were not the good guys. We were the bad guys, you're attacking

“FREEDOM IS NOT JUST FREEDOM FROM. IT’S FREEDOM FOR SOMETHING. FORGIVENESS AND REPENTANCE ARE NOT SIMPLY ABOUT WASHING OURSELVES CLEAN OF PAST SINS, BUT ABOUT RE-ENERGISING OURSELVES FOR MISSION.”

people’s very sense of pride in their nationhood... and that is why the attacks on Project Spire have been so vitriolic.” He further clarified that criticism has often been based on misinformation, particularly regarding the source of the funding. He clarified that the £100 million comes from capital rather than parish donations and that the intention is not only to address the church’s own historic complicity but also to encourage other British institutions to confront their past involvement in slavery. He also reiterated that the project seeks to invest in businesses owned by descendants of enslaved people in the West Indies, West Africa, and diasporan communities, moving beyond grant-giving towards long-term economic empowerment.

While discussing “establishment,” Bishop Walker reflected on his role within the Church of England and as a member of the House of Lords. This position provides assets and privileges, including the ability to question government directly and propose amendments to legislation. However, it also means that church laws require parliamentary approval and that bishops are appointed by the Crown, showing the constitutional interweaving of the church and government.

Under “engagement,” Bishop Walker spoke about the role of priests as community leaders, responsible for pastoral care of parishes and addressing poverty and injustice. He emphasised the need to “transition from doing for to being with” communities, highlighting the importance of solidarity and partnership rather than paternalism. He cited examples of clergy facing trial due to their support for Palestinian Action, presenting the church’s commitment to standing against injustice.

Speaking on “education,” Bishop Walker mentioned that the Diocese of Manchester has 193 Church of England schools educating approximately 60,000 children daily and welcoming students from all faiths. He highlighted the Shades Project, which teaches primary school children anti-racism and the value of diversity.

Finally speaking on “emancipation,” Bishop Walker explored the theological dimension of freedom in Christ. He explained that it is not merely freedom from past wrongdoings but freedom to become who Jesus calls each person to be. He emphasised a forward-looking approach to reparative justice, stating “freedom is not just freedom from. It’s freedom for something. Forgiveness and repentance are not simply about washing ourselves clean of past sins, but about re-energising ourselves for mission.”

THE LEGACY OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN SARAWAK

Bishop Jute began by outlining the historical roots of Anglican mission in Sarawak. Missionary work commenced in 1848 when Francis McDougall arrived at the invitation of the “White Rajah”. The White Rajah referred to a British explorer, James Brooke, who assisted the Sultan of Brunei and was subsequently granted rule over Sarawak. As a result, the Anglican Church in the region developed under the patronage of the Brooke family rather than through direct imperial



administration. Nevertheless, this arrangement gave the Church a distinctly British character and embedded it within structures of colonial influence.

Bishop Jute described the legacy of this missionary period as “a story of cultural displacement and profound cultural tension.” He explained that many older Christians in Sarawak still identify themselves as “SPG Christians,” referring to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. He suggested that reveals a deeper issue as Christianity did not emerge organically from within Indigenous culture but remained associated with a foreign missionary identity.

Although missionaries contributed positively through literacy, education, and medical care, they often regarded Indigenous culture as inferior and in need of reform. Traditional ways of life, known as Adat, were condemned as “devilish,” “satanic” or “superstitious.” Practices embedded in local sacred theology and ecological understanding were dismissed, which destructed Indigenous worldviews, authority structures and community cohesion. Bishop Danald observed that communities continue, to a large extent, to live “under its cloud,” particularly within longhouse communities where communal life was disrupted.

He also mentioned that a key aspect of this legacy was its impact on the local language. While the Bible was translated into local languages, missionaries introduced what Bishop Jute described as “churchified” vocabulary. Key theological terms were imported from English or Malay rather than emerging from Indigenous linguistic frameworks. As a result, the local “mother-father tongues” became colonised, gradually losing the connection to their culture.

Identity was also affected through the deliberate replacement of Indigenous names with biblical names. This practice affected genealogical tracking and removed connections to ancestral heritage. Traditional names carried meaning within the community’s cosmology and lineage structures. Although biblical names also possess meaning, Bishop Jute stated that “they have nothing to do with us,” as they were detached from local history and identity.

Education also played a role as early mission schools functioned as tools of assimilation. Education was portrayed as a means of “civilising” Indigenous communities. Traditional longhouse living was looked at as backward or “filthy.” Children were taught hygiene and Western norms, but in ways that denigrated their own cultural environment. Instead of building upon Indigenous knowledge and structures in place, schooling often required a separation from them.

To conclude, Bishop Jute posed a question, how does one gather up the broken pieces of such a legacy? In response to this question, he used the metaphor of stained glass. Stained glass windows are not formed from a single pane but from many broken pieces assembled together. He suggested that

communities that have been impacted by these legacies can also be reassembled into something beautiful and reflect God’s light and truth.

THE LEGACY OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES

Attorney Lalwet began his presentation by explaining the historical context of the Philippines. He mentioned that the country was under the Spanish rule for 300 years, followed by 50 years under the American administration. He focused particularly on the American period (1898–1948), as this was when the Episcopal Church was formally established. He described this inheritance as both empowering and damaging.

He illustrated this dual legacy through the story of Pitapit, an Indigenous Ifugao boy adopted by the missionary Revd Walter Clapp. Through Western education and Christian formation, Pitapit became Dr Hillary Clapp, later serving as a medical doctor and provincial governor. This represents one of the best legacies of mission: access to education, intellectual development, and professional opportunities. However, it also reflects one of the worst, as Christianity was presented within a Western cultural framework, which required assimilation and the displacement of Indigenous identity and spirituality. It implied that Indigenous views and practices were inadequate and inferior. Attorney Floyd pointed out that the missionary outlook often dismissed Indigenous beliefs as animism, paganism, or backwardness, thus weakening communal structures and spiritual consciousness. Even though education was transformative, it functioned as a tool of cultural erasure. Pitapit’s transformation symbolises this tension as empowerment came at the cost of cultural disruption.

Attorney Lalwet proposed a shift from a deficit-based missionary approach to an asset-based theology. Rather than assuming that God arrived with the missionaries, he asserted that “God was here even before the missionaries came.” He advocated reclaiming Indigenous spirituality and values, such as sharing, communal responsibility and interconnectedness, as authentic expressions of Christian faith. In conclusion, he presented a vision of reconciliation, emphasising that churches need to honour their history, learn from failures, restore what was diminished and integrate Indigenous identity.

DISCUSSIONS AND REFLECTIONS ON LEGACY (2)

Archbishop Wright asked whether there is space within these contexts for critique of Indigenous religion or practices, or whether they are accepted uncritically. Attorney Lalwet responded that not all traditional practices were eliminated, as many continue to serve meaningful social and spiritual purposes. Indigenous belief in a creator spirit remains but it focuses more on nature and ancestral spirituality. He suggested that an awareness of the spiritual dimension of creation is not unbiblical and that ancestral reverence may be understood in ways comparable to the veneration of saints rather than worship. However, he mentioned that it is key to

have boundaries, e.g. blood sacrifice is no longer practised. He highlighted that earlier missionaries often dismissed all aspects of the Indigenous systems rather than allowing them to develop into locally grounded Christian understanding.

Bishop Martin Reakes-Williams, cautioned against moving from one imbalance to another, from assuming Western superiority to romanticising non-Western cultures while engaging only in Western self-criticism. He emphasised that the real richness comes from mutual learning, where people from different cultures both help to deepen and challenge one another's understanding. He suggested that losing the capacity for constructive critique in both directions could be quite disruptive. If the paradigm shifts too far toward uncritical acceptance of non-Western cultures while being only critical of Western ones, "we lose that ability to be critical of one another and hear the criticism of one another."

Bishop Walker agreed that it is important to be both critical and constructive. He mentioned that encountering other cultures helps individuals recognise both the strengths and deficiencies within their own traditions. He concluded by stating that the task is to hold together honest self-examination with appreciation, seeking a balanced and constructive path forward.





COMMUNIQUÉ

After the talks concluded, the delegates put together a communiqué. The communiqué called on Anglican provinces, dioceses, and partners to examine how their histories are shaped by questions of language, land, and legacy. It invited the wider church to express solidarity through prayer, learning from marginalised communities and taking practical steps such as reviewing investments, landholdings, and partnerships to ensure they align with the gospel's call to break every chain of injustice.

Read the communiqué in full overleaf.

BREAKING THE CHAINS OF INJUSTICE: REIMAGINING MISSIONAL THEOLOGIES TODAY

Manila, the Philippines – February 2026



Grace and peace to our sisters and brothers in Christ across the Anglican Communion. We offer the following reflections from 'Breaking the Chains of Injustice: Reimagining Mission Theologies Today', the USPG International Consultation 2026 and we invite you to consider responding to our call for action.

A group of 40 Anglican church leaders from 31 different countries across the Communion met in the Philippines for the fifth International Consultation of the Anglican Mission agency USP (United Society Partners in the Gospel). The theme of the gathering was "Breaking the Chains of Injustice: Reimagining Mission Theologies Today" which explored issues surrounding language, land and legacy. We are extremely grateful to our generous hosts, the Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP) and the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI).

Our group consisted of primates, bishops, clergy and lay leaders. We were also joined by theologians who led Bible studies, representatives of the USP staff and trustee board, worship consultants and the ECP and the IFI. Seminarians from the Aglipay Central Theological Seminary of the IFI and the St Andrews Theological Seminary of the ECP enriched our gathering by leading and participating in our worship. We received greetings from the Rt Revd Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE, Archbishop of Canterbury, who thanked the participants for their leadership, faithfulness, and witness to Christ's reconciling love in every corner of the world.

The choice of the Philippines for our gathering was significant as we sought to (re)root and (re)route mission

theology as participation in God's ongoing work of justice. The country bears marks of the deep wounds of Spanish and American colonialism, as well as the Manila massacre under Japanese occupation. We have been struck by the courageous witness of the IFI and the ECP and their stories of struggle, solidarity and sacrifice. We learnt about the stories of the martyred IFI Bishop Alberto Ramento who taught that a faith that does not disturb injustice is no faith at all. We sang the words "Mine are the hands that reach out to you oh God, in prayer and in deeds" from a song composed by IFI Deacon Aldeem Yañez, who was ordained whilst detained inside the Cagayan de Oro City District Jail. Our immersion visits to different church projects offered us glimpses of their ongoing resilience in the face of agrarian injustice, denial of indigenous rights, systemic corruption and (re)colonisation.

Our time together has fostered in us a resolve to be people of respair (an Old English word for fresh hope) in a global context that could be easily described as one of despair. Trusting that God's Spirit is already re-weaving justice in the midst of today's empires, we offer this communiqué in a spirit of imagination and invitation.

A BANIG OF BELIEVING, BELONGING AND BEING DOERS OF THE WORD - REIMAGINING MISSIONAL THEOLOGIES:

This communiqué draws inspiration from the *banig* - a Filipino woven mat crafted by the often unseen labour of women - a metaphor for making visible experiences that are often forgotten.

Bearing the *banig* in mind, we seek to reweave our missional imagination through **believing, belonging and being doers of the word.**

BELIEVING:

Our starting point for the reimagining of our mission theologies were our liturgies and Bible studies. We recognise that how we pray shapes how we believe and live. We affirm the importance of paying attention to the language we use for God, the use of the arts in our worship and understanding so that, as we prayed, “our worship will not end in words, that our faith will learn how to stand, and our love will show up when needed”.

BELONGING:

Testimonies from the panellists helped us to understand injustice in terms of estrangement. Injustice in the context of language, land and legacy is ‘forced displacement’ from our identity and culture as human beings, from our kinship with the earth and from our relationships with one another. We understood justice in terms of restorative belonging and so we asked God to:

“Teach us again how to belong
not to profit,
not to violence masked as development,
but to one another,
and to the fragile web of life...”

AN INVITATION TO THE WIDER CHURCH

This communiqué is not a conclusion but an invitation. We call on all Anglican provinces, dioceses, congregations, partners in God’s mission, and people of goodwill to discern how their histories and identities are entangled with questions around language, land and legacy and invite the wider Church to express solidarity by:

- Praying with and for communities that struggle for land, language and life, and integrate these concerns into worship and intercession.
- Visiting and learning from Indigenous, Afro-descendant, migrant and other marginalised communities where Christ’s voice is heard in struggle.
- Acting by, amongst other things, reviewing investments, landholdings, partnerships and curricula to ensure alignment with the Gospel’s call to break every chain of injustice.

We believe that as the Church seeks to break the bonds of oppression, shares bread with the hungry and honours the cries of both the earth and the poor, the light of God’s future will break forth among us. May language heal, may land be cherished, and may legacy become a path toward God’s just and reconciled future.

BEING DOERS OF THE WORD:

Our experience in the Philippines taught us that reimagining our mission theologies involves aligning our wills and ways to God’s own beating heart for the world, not just through our words but our actions. In this spirit, we seek to move forward in our witness, placing our trust in a God who does not abandon us to the stories we inherit, but invites us to become co-creators of a more truthful and loving future. In this spirit we commit ourselves:

To develop theologies where proclamation and prophetic witness are intertwined.

We commit to a mission theology in which evangelisation and discipleship are inseparable from the struggle for justice and the integrity of creation. We reject any practice that colludes with empire, racial hierarchy, or extractive capitalism.

To honour land as a gift and partner from God in mission.

We will listen to theologies arising from communities whose identity is bound to land and sea, advocating with and for those resisting mining, logging, agribusiness, militarisation, and exclusion from land in the name of conservation.

To liberate our theological language.

We will promote worship that respects the languages of the people and everyday speech, conducting linguistic audits, supporting Bible translation and publishing theological resources in indigenous and minoritised languages, as well as fostering multilingual liturgies that embody inclusion.

To own and transform legacy through truth-telling.

We commit to truth-telling about the links between Anglican mission, colonialism, slavery, plantation economies, and racialised hierarchies. We welcome concrete programmes of reparative justice - financial, structural, and memorial - as tangible acts of repentance and seeds of a shared just future.

To stand in solidarity with churches who resist current empires.

We stand in prayerful solidarity with churches that risk persecution or death defending land, labour, and life – particularly in the Philippines, Amazon, Melanesia, Palestine, Canada and beyond.

To reimagine formation and partnership.

We will work toward theological education “beyond empire,” centring voices from communities long marginalised and building mutual relationships where those once called “mission fields” are now recognised as teachers and theologians for the whole Communion.

SIGNED BY PRIMATES AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBER CHURCHES AND USPG

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Prime Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines

The Most Revd Joel Porlares

Obispo Maximo of Iglesia Filipina Independiente

The Most Revd Juan David Alvarado Melgar

Primate of Iglesia Anglicana de la Region Central de America and Bishop of the Anglican Episcopal Church of El Salvador

The Most Revd Marinez Rosa dos Santos Bassotto

Primate of the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil and Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Amazonia

The Most Revd Leonard Dawea

Primate of the Anglican Church of Melanesia and Bishop of Central Melanesia

The Most Revd Dr Maimbo Mndolwa

Primate of the Anglican Church of Tanzania and Bishop of Tanga

The Most Revd Vicente Msosa

Primate of the Igreja Anglicana de Moçambique e Angola and Bishop of Zambezia Missionary Diocese

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Worship Consultant, Episcopal Divinity School (EDS)

Mr Klein Emperado

Liturgist, Iglesia Filipina Independiente

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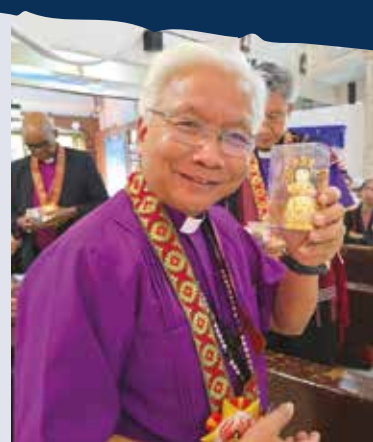
Ms Zoey Smith

The Revd Davidson Solanki

Dr Paulo Ueti

Ms Rachel Weller







EXPOSURE TRIPS

Delegates were accompanied by Fr Edoi, Revd Jewel, Bro Koko, Bro Brickxler, Fr Jonash and Revd Grace, as they visited several community projects across Manila and nearby provinces. They engaged with children at the Eskwelayan programme in Tondo, met the Aeta Indigenous community in Porac, observed agricultural programmes at Annunciation Farmers' Cooperative in Licab and learned about urban poor livelihoods in Sitio Pintor, Rodriguez. These visits provided firsthand insights into the challenges and resilience of the local communities.



SITIO PINTOR

Delegates also visited Sitio Pintor, an urban poor community of informal settlers in Metro Manila and Rizal, part of the Payatas area (Smoky Mountain) where scavenging has been a major livelihood.

During the visit, they learned how E-CARE supported 24 households during the COVID-19 pandemic through livelihood programmes, which enabled residents to start alternative income sources such as animal husbandry and small businesses under the Road to Growth programme.



AETA INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY MINISTRY

Delegates visited the Aeta Indigenous Community in Porac, Pampanga, where land, livelihood and identity are deeply intertwined.

The Aetas face ongoing threats to their ancestral lands from exploitative market practices, government projects and corporate interests, undermining both economic security and cultural survival. IFI and the Diocese of Rizal and Pampanga have undertaken a meaningful mission to extend support and guidance to the Aetas. The diocese has been dedicated to building a mission in the Aeta areas since 2014 until now.

IFI and the Diocese of Rizal and Pampanga aim to not only strengthen the faith of the Aetas but also contribute significantly to enhancing their overall quality of life.





THE ANNUNCIATION FARMERS AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE

Delegates visited the Annunciation Farmers Agricultural Cooperative in Licab, Nueva Ecija, a community established by native Ilocanos, Tagalogs and Cordillera migrants who transformed an undeveloped, flood-prone area into productive farmland and built communal infrastructure through collective efforts.

During the visit, they learned how the community, in partnership with E-CARE since 2010, has used the Asset-Based Community Development approach to strengthen self-reliance and manage livelihood programmes.

The visit also highlighted the Receivers to Givers programme, through which the community shares resources and support with other communities.





THE ESKWELAYAN PROJECT IN AROMA

Delegates visited the Eskwelayan Project in Aroma, Tondo, a grassroots project responding to poverty, housing insecurity and limited access to education.

Established in 2016 amid demolition threats, the programme now supports around 100 vulnerable children through tailored learning, health and nutrition assistance.

The project also engages parents to strengthen family and community support systems.



HUMAN RIGHT WORKERS

Delegates met with Filipino human rights defenders supported by the IFI, hearing firsthand about their experiences of harassment and the Church's 20-year commitment to sustaining human rights work.

Discussions also highlighted past and ongoing violations affecting clergy and lay workers.





CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR USPG'S WORK?

Following the reflections shared throughout the International Consultation and in alignment with the commitments set out in the communiqué, delegates reiterated that reimagining mission theology requires aligning both our will and practice with God's own heart for the world, not only in word, but in action. The consultation emphasised that reimagining mission theology is not an abstract exercise but a pressing responsibility, requiring humility and sustained commitment, particularly in confronting the Church's historical entanglements with systems of oppression. Testimonies from the Caribbean, the Philippines, Ghana, and other contexts underlined the urgency of truth-telling, reparative action and solidarity with communities who continue to bear the weight of injustice.

Across the three interwoven themes of language, land and legacy, the delegates recognised that mission must be honest about the past, attentive to the present and courageous in shaping the future. This has implications for USPG's own work as a global mission agency whose strategic priorities are: Rethinking Mission, Energising Church, and Championing Justice.

LANGUAGE

Regarding language, delegates concluded that language is not neutral; it carries power, memory, and identity. Reclaiming and valuing local languages, expressions of worship and Indigenous theological voices is essential for dismantling colonial patterns that continue to shape church life. Supporting communities to pray, preach and theologise in their own voices is therefore a key act of justice and renewal.

For USPG, this implies decolonising missional imagination by supporting the work of translations, creating communities of dialogical learning which can be enriched by the theological riches of the other, transforming theological education so that some do not remain passive consumers of Eurocentric theologies but are active creators of knowledge, and producing theological resources which engage constructively with local knowledge and context.

LAND

Regarding land, our conversations helped to highlight the theological significance of land as gift, inheritance, and responsibility. Delegates emphasised that mission must stand alongside communities facing dispossession, environmental degradation, and exploitative economic systems. Care for creation and solidarity with Indigenous people are not secondary concerns but integral to God's justice.

For USPG this implies strengthening our solidarity with communities resisting occupation, land grabbing and forced displacement, supporting churches as they promote awareness of legal mechanisms which protect the land rights of vulnerable communities, and developing prophetic theologies of land and sea (moana theologies) which resist misleading biblical interpretations that justify occupation and are complicit with policies and practices of exploitation and extraction.

LEGACY

Regarding legacy, the consultation emphasised the importance of truth-telling about the Anglican Church's historical entanglements with colonialism and slavery. Acknowledging painful histories is a necessary step towards healing. Delegates recognised that repentance must be accompanied by tangible commitments to reparative justice, renewed relationships, and institutional transformation.

For USPG, this implies shaping our Codrington project on 'Renewal and Reconciliation' in ways which are genuinely transformative and restorative and can leave a legacy of justice and healing. It also entails reflecting critically and constructively on our relational and programmatic engagement to ensure that they do not replicate and reinforce colonial patterns of deficit and dependence, but embody the recognition that we are all children of God and join-heirs with Christ (cf. Romans 8:17), in whom we are knit together as one body, and called to promote our common growth by building each other up in love (cf. Ephesians 4:15,16).

The consultation concluded with a call to action: to be doers of the Word reminding us that missional reimagination needs to hold together theological reflection and transformative action. It recognised that only through such commitment, which can hold together word and deed in creative and constructive discipleship, that the Anglican Communion can more fully embody the call to break the chains of injustice and to live as a sign of hope in God's world. Participants reaffirmed this commitment in the final eucharist as they prayed the following prayer from the concluding eucharist:

Spirit who sends us out,
do not let this table be the end of our courage.
Send us back to contested lands as companions, not conquerors;
to many languages, as listeners before speakers;
to complicated legacies, with honesty, repentance, and hope.
May what we have received,
become what we practice:
justice embodied,
faith translated,
and love made known.



**THE CONSULTATION CONCLUDED WITH
A CALL TO ACTION: TO BE DOERS OF
THE WORD**



GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

GENERAL

- **Five Marks of Mission (1984)** – Anglican framework guiding church action and witness, outlining the church's call to evangelism, discipleship, service, justice, and stewardship of creation.
 - **Tell**
Proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
 - **Teach**
Baptise and nurture new believers
 - **Tend**
Respond to human need by loving service
 - **Transform**
Unjust structures of society, challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
 - **Treasure**
Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

LANGUAGE

- **Inculturation**
Expressing Christian faith within local cultural frameworks while preserving core theology.
- **Indigenisation**
Creating original liturgical and theological material in the idiom of local cultures for authentic faith expression.
- **Language reclamation**
Reviving marginalised or lost languages to preserve culture, theology, and community identity.
- **'Market language'**
Everyday, accessible language used in worship to ensure understanding and participation.

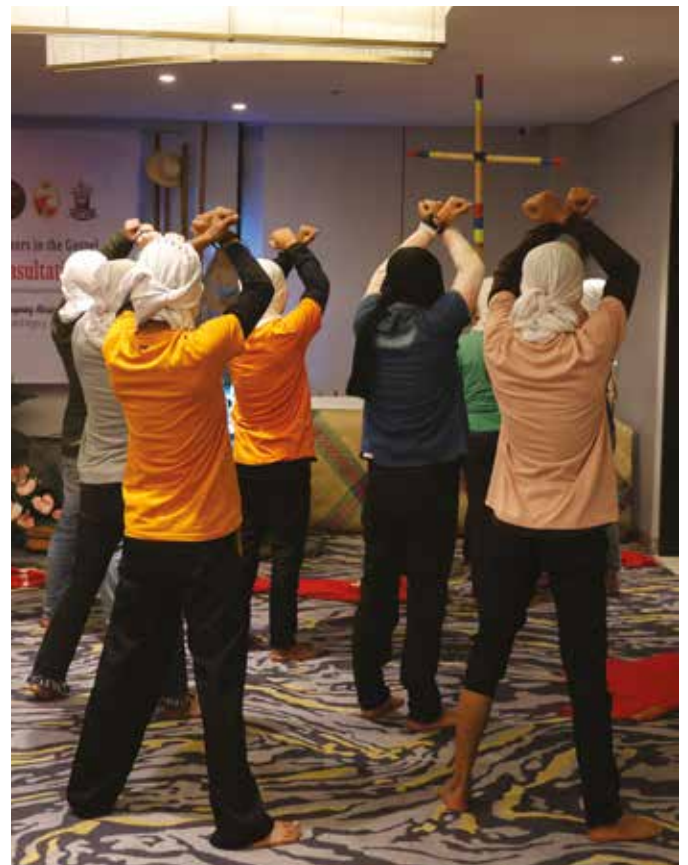
LAND

- **Creatio ex nihilo**
Traditional idea of creation from nothing; contrasted with co-creation frameworks recognising earth's role.
- **Economics of enough**
Promoting sustainable living and sufficiency rather than exploitation.
- **Extractive economies**
Economic systems reliant on mining, logging, or agribusiness, often harming local communities.
- **Fonua**
Polynesian concept of earth as co-creator, highlighting human connection with land and divine creation.
- **Gawat**
Communal land-sharing system in the Philippines allowing temporary access to land for those in need, promoting fairness and stewardship.
- **Green apostles**
Community members who monitor environmental changes and advocate for ecological justice.
- **Haciendas**
Large estates, historically acquired during colonial periods, often displacing Indigenous communities.
- **Jubilee law**
Biblical law promoting fairness, rest for people and land, and the prevention of extreme wealth accumulation.
- **Mana**
Polynesian idea of sacred power or energy present in people, land, and creation.
- **Ohwatsya**
An Oneida/Iroquois word for land, earth, or territory.
- **Pudong**
Knotted leaves used by some Igorot communities in the northern Philippines as a traditional sign to mark rest days or sacred periods when land is left undisturbed.
- **Right to refuse**
The idea that owning or controlling land includes the power to exclude others or deny them access, presence, or use of that land.
- **Tapu**
Polynesian principle of sacredness or wholeness, protecting people, land, and spiritual practices.

- **Tekoha**
A word from Guarani, an Indigenous language of the Amazon region. It conveys the idea of land or territory as a living, communal, and spiritual space.
- **Terra nullius**
Doctrine used to justify colonial claims over “empty” lands, ignoring Indigenous occupation.
- **Ubaya**
Indigenous practice in the northern Philippines of declaring community rest days for people and land, often around harvest cycles.

LEGACY

- **Doctrine of Discovery**
Legal and religious principle historically legitimising colonial conquest and dispossession.
- **Plantation economies**
Agricultural systems dependent on enslaved or exploited labour to produce cash crops.
- **Slave Bible**
A heavily edited version of the Bible produced in the early 19th century for enslaved people, omitting passages on freedom and liberation to suppress resistance and reinforce control.





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