



Francophone bishops and spouses from the Anglican Communion gather in Nairobi to discuss mission, leadership and community transformation

A gathering for Francophone bishops and their spouses starts today in Nairobi, to discuss mission, leadership development and community transformation. Recognising the shared values, traditions and customs of those who identify with the Francophone world, the event is an opportunity for French-speaking bishops to resource one another as they develop their Francophone Anglican identity.

The gathering (running 3-10 September in Nairobi) is facilitated by three Anglican groups including: the Francophone Network of the Anglican Communion, the Council of Anglican Provinces in Africa (CAPA), and the Episcopal Ministry (EMAC) team at the Anglican Communion Office. Representatives from Tearfund will also support the event.

Delegates are attending from six Provinces of the Anglican Communion. Many serve and represent communities from some of the churches most vulnerable regions, including Burundi, the DRC and Madagascar.

The gathering is led by a number of French-speaking contributors, including the Most Revd Ian Ernest and Kamla Ernest, Desire Majambere, Hebdavi Kyeya, Revd Steve Muneza and Estele Dibo Elango.

Words of welcome

During the opening service, words of welcome were shared by the Most Revd Jackson Ole Sapit, the Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Kenya and regional Primate for Africa, who said: 'We are coming together as an Anglican family. Journeying together we make it stronger than walking individually...God has given us one shared identity, Christ is a unifier. The Anglican communion is our common heritage. It brings us together globally as a family and despite what separates us, like language or cultural barriers, we have one identity in Christ. That is our greatest joy is the way we have a shared identity, a shared humanity.'

A video message was sent by the Most Reverend Albert Chama (the Archbishop and Primate of the Church of the Province of Central Africa and the Chairperson of CAPA) who said: 'In the global Anglican landscape, the collective voice of the Francophone group is essential. The rapid growth and dynamism of the Anglican faith are particularly evident in the African region, and Francophone Africa is at the very heart of the movement.... By standing together, you ensure that the Francophone experience is not an afterthought but an integral part of the conversations shaping the future of the communion. You can articulate a vision of Anglicanism that is authentically African and authentically Francophone.'



Discussing church and community transformation

A major focus at the gathering will be exploring how churches can take an 'asset-based' approach to mission, church and community transformation (CCT), especially in areas facing extreme poverty. Asset-based development takes a community-led approach to driving change. Starting with the strengths, skills and resources within a community, local congregations identify the needs and opportunities of an area, and work together to take action on what's most important to them. It is a major focus in the work of international development charity Tearfund.

Discussion will be facilitated by representatives from Tearfund with expertise in asset-based delivery. Hebdavi Kyeya (Tearfund Regional Director for East and Central Africa) who will lead some of the sessions said: 'In countless communities across the Anglican Communion, we bear witness to the daily reality of extreme poverty. Yet, in the face of these challenges, I am filled with hope. For I believe that within our church communities lie innate strengths and divine potential waiting to be unleashed. This gathering is more than just a conference; it is a catalyst. My prayer is that our collective dialogue will not only enrich and strengthen God's church across the Francophone world, but also empower us to become agents of profound transformation, activating the Spirit's power to create lasting change.'

The wider programme

The wider conference programme will combine opportunities for Retreat, Bible Study, prayer and fellowship, with sessions for dialogue, capacity development and resource sharing. The group will also hear updates from the Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission and the Anglican Communion Science Commission.

Recognising the crucial role of bishops' spouses in ministry and leadership, the gathering includes dedicated sessions for attending spouses. In many parts of the Anglican Communion, bishops' spouses play a vital role in diocesan ministry and outreach.

Speaking about the importance of the Francophone Network, the Rt Revd Ian Ernest, said: 'I am deeply grateful to God that the mission of the Francophone Network is being considered as being important to the life and witness of the Anglican Communion. Its influence over the past decades is significant as it shows how much the process of inculturation in terms of theological training and liturgy has helped in widening the comprehensiveness of our worldwide Church.'

The Most Revd Dr Ratelison Rakotondravelo Gilbert, Archbishop and Primate of Anglican Church of the Indian Ocean said: 'This gathering holds deep significance as it brings together Francophone Anglican Archbishops in a spirit of unity, reflection, and shared responsibility. It provides a vital forum for discerning our common mission, strengthening ecclesial bonds, and responding collectively to the pastoral and spiritual needs of our communities. In convening as



one body, we bear witness to the enduring communion of the Anglican tradition across linguistic and cultural boundaries.'

The Rt Revd Jo Wells, the Deputy Secretary General of the Anglican Communion said: 'At the Anglican Communion Office, we work to grow connections and facilitate capacity development amongst bishops and clergy around the world. We are delighted to be part of this gathering of Francophone bishops and spouses. When we gather, we can share our experiences, shape one another's practice and deepen our faith. Then our individual stories become God's story, and a new future opens up.'

The Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, the Rt Revd Anthony Poggo, is due to attend the gathering on September 9-10. Speaking about his hopes for the gathering the Secretary General said: 'The Anglican Communion is a global network of churches. With French recognised as an official language in 29 countries around the world, the ministry of Francophone bishops and spouses is a vital part of mission and outreach. I am delighted that this event is happening, and pray that God will continue to deepen bonds of friendship and collaboration between those taking part.'

During the week, elections will also be held for new leadership of the Francophone Network as the previous committee steps back. The Anglican Francophone Network connects French-speaking bishops across the Anglican Communion, providing mutual support and resources for mission and education across their diverse cultural and economic contexts. The network plays a crucial role in supporting Anglican ministry in French-speaking regions worldwide.

Read the story on the Anglican Communion News Service [here](#)