

Which Way the UK Asian Church?

Jewels in His Crown ran a successful conference over the weekend 25-27 June 2010 at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire.

Speakers included: Pastor G I Ebenezer, Kumar Rajagopalan, Pradip Sudra and Clive Thorne.

Text of Press Release issued after the conference on 30 June 2010

Asian Christians pledge to work together for mission as part of the whole church.

Participants at the sixth 'Jewels in His Crown' conference celebrated their unity and diversity and explored the theme '**Which Way the UK Asian Church?**'. They pledged to work together with each other and the wider church and to engage more effectively with people of all faiths in the spiritual, social, cultural and political areas.

The participants represented Asian church leaders and members, mission agencies and mainstream UK churches. They affirmed the place of different forms including Asian led and Asian majority churches, multi-cultural churches and groups centre on common interests, as well as the role of mainstream and traditional churches in the UK. The conference resolved not to 'jump to conclusions or pre-judge other models, but respond with grace'. They acknowledged divisions between language, community and denominational groupings and committed themselves to work together to demonstrate unity across boundaries within the Asian communities and with the church as a whole. They welcomed the recent formation of the South Asian Forum of the Evangelical Alliance to represent concerns to the government, media and the wider church.

"We need to take the initiative both ways" said Ram Gidoomal, SAF's chairman. "Asian churches would like to contribute to the wider church, while also gaining recognition for their particular concerns and contribution." Responding to questions raised by the BBC Asian Network about 'neglect' and 'welcome' (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8755761.stm>), he said "This conference has addressed the very real issues that some have faced, by affirming different models and pledging to work together".

The conference also agreed to seek closer relationships with African-Caribbean and other Asian churches who have been on a similar journey and face similar issues. They noted the strengthening commitment to religious and cultural values in all faith communities and the evidence of spiritual search and resolve to respond creatively, bearing witness to the good news of Jesus. "We want to be distinctive, not so much by our labels and community identity as by our love, unity and service to all."

Young people played a key role, which the conference welcomed, while at the same time acknowledging that Asian church and family leaders need to give more encouragement and freedom to let them develop their distinctive cultural forms.

Read further on the conference by clicking 'recent events' above

*Follow discussion from a BBC Asian Network article on the South Asian Forum website, <http://www.eauk.org/saf/> **

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