

Archbishop Justin Welby has launched an international network aimed at training the next generation of leaders to be reconcilers within their churches, communities and nations.

The Reconciling Leaders Network, launched at Lambeth Palace last night, is mobilising and resourcing an international movement of mediators and reconcilers – both ordained and lay – to equip their local communities, churches and workplaces to serve in the midst of conflict.

The network will equip experienced lay and ordained peace-builders to use their experience to resource the Church and mentor the next generation. It will also have a focus on supporting women in the midst of conflict in their vital roles as reconcilers.

Around 150 guests drawn from the church, government, military, NGOs and community groups attended the launch.

During the evening, Archbishop Justin and Canon Sarah Snyder, the Archbishop's Adviser for Reconciliation, outlined their vision for the network.

Archbishop Justin said: "What we're doing with the Reconciling Leaders Network is saying to the world that hate is not necessary, essential, or always conquering. Hate is overcome in Christ, and if we work at this we can enable many places and many parts of the world to overcome hatred and violence – in families and at every level of human society."

He added: "If the Church is to be convincing that Jesus came from the Father, died on the cross, rose from the dead, ascended and will return, if we are to have any authenticity in that, we must be reconciled reconcilers. We must be people who are completely reconciled to God – or en route; we won't get there in this life; we must be reconciling to each other – and, essentially, we must share that reconciliation with the world, so that they see what Jesus does to change lives."

The Archbishop's Adviser for Reconciliation, Canon Sarah Snyder, said: "Jesus calls us to love not only our neighbour, but ourselves, and our enemies. In doing so, he places a high bar on what reconciliation might look like in practice.

"When others see reconciling and reconciled relationships across risky borders, they are drawn to seek the source of reconciliation, to Christ Himself. When churches live out this calling, not only within their own congregations, but serving the wider communities around them, they are deeply relevant and attractive. Reconciliation, lived out, is an act of mission. And it applies to every one of us, whether serving cups of coffee, or mediating international conflict."

Ken Costa, Chair of the Reconciling Leaders Network, said: "Reconciliation in our fractured world is the greatest call on the church today. It is at the very heart of the Christian faith and transforms how we live out responses to pain and injustice – recognising dignity in difference, humility in conviction and grace in constructive responses to conflict.

"Throughout their ministry, Justin and Caroline have been, and continue to be, active on the front-line of reconciliation both internationally and

domestically. We are delighted that the Reconciling Leaders Network will be building on the foundations they have already laid over many years.

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