PATHS OF LIFE NETWORK

Hikma Partnership
researching, writing, creating and sharing

THANK YOU

Dear friends,

Last month, more than 150 people from 35 countries gathered in Chiang Mai, Thailand for the Hikma Partnership and the Paths of Life Network gatherings. These events were only possible because of your generosity and prayers and we want to begin simply by saying thank you.

The gatherings felt like a family reunion of God's people. Participants, BMBs especially, repeatedly described feeling "*at home and blessed*": welcomed, encouraged, and reminded that they are not alone in their faith journey. Together we worshipped in many languages, shared communion, and listened to testimonies from Afghan, Iranian, Somali, Bangladeshi, Fulani and many other brothers and sisters. The stories of faith in the midst of pressure and hardship touched hearts and gave fresh hope that God's church is alive and growing even in the hardest of places.

Alongside that, each event served its unique purpose. The Hikma Partnership International Gathering brought BMB voices to the forefront, helping us reflect on the BMB experience of belonging to the household of God across different contexts and to plan for the future of this Partnership together.

Meeting with so many mature BMBs and servant-hearted non-BMBs who were so open, honest, transparent about both the joys and the burdens of belonging to the household of God... [has] encouraged and inspired me more than I could possibly have imagined.

This is the first gathering in which I feel I have been properly seen and heard.

Pat, who leads the Hikma Partnership team, shared: "Highlights for the Hikma Gathering included the spiritual depth and sense of family experienced by participants. There was great success in connecting with attendees, both existing partners and those new to Hikma. Participants said to us, '*now we understand what Hikma is all about and why we were encouraged to be here and join*.' We saw the impact of personal stories and honest interactions about the longing to belong of BMBs in relation to their place in the household of God. There was a touching moment of reconciliation between two BMB attendees who had distrusted each other previously. The positive response to the conference's combination of robust academic and yet also very grounded and practical content was encouraging, with a desire for more of this type of work moving forward and the broad level of response from three-quarters of attendees who signed up to be partners and indicated their desire to get involved in a variety of ways."

A particularly moving moment came through the message of Bishop Dr. Yassir Eric, who was born and raised in Sudan and once lived as a radicalised Muslim before encountering Christ. Now serving as Presiding Bishop of the Anglican Church's Ekkios, Bishop Yassir spoke with deep conviction about the significance of what God is doing through Hikma Partnership and Paths of Life:

Hikma is addressing the need for MBBs to research and write and speak for ourselves and to be heard.. I have many demands on my time and am asked to get involved in various initiatives to support our people, but I have decided to focus on just a few essential ministries that focus on MBB ecclesial belonging... Hikma is one of those. - Bishop Yassir

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The **Paths of Life Network** event, meanwhile, created space for those involved in BMB discipleship curriculum development to share resources, learn from one another and plan for future collaborations. New resources were shared and received with excitement as tools that can immediately strengthen discipleship in local contexts.

Jenni, who has led the Paths of Life team through the first three years, shared that: "We also heard from BMB brothers and sisters in West Africa, the Horn of Africa, Pakistan, Bangladesh, East Asia and the Middle East about how they are equipping the church for BMB discipleship. It was deeply encouraging to see people from around the world with the same heart for BMB discipleship exploring collaboration and ways of working together. One highlight was the discussion times where groups thought through six key ways that we as a network can best collaborate into the future - focusing on developing the strength of the network and sharing resources to equip and build up one another."

We heard many stories and testimonies that inspired. I found a lot of resources and networks that will benefit our work.

Thank you for hosting this remarkable gathering, for bringing these voices to the table, and for all your work and love and effort and heart which you have poured into this. It has been a huge blessing and I believe it will continue to be beyond this.

Beyond the sessions, people found new friends, renewed old partnerships and left inspired by the sense of what is possible when we work together.

Alongside all the encouragement, participants also shared thoughtful ideas for the future. People asked for more future opportunities for discussions, for testimonies, and for dedicated sessions on issues such as diaspora, women and trauma healing. Many called for future regional gatherings - such as in Africa and in Russian-speaking contexts - so that the blessing of meeting together to explore these topics and learn together can reach even more people. Above all, participants asked that we keep investing in leadership among BMBs and that we continue to respond to the Holy Spirit's direction.

All of this was possible because of you - your giving, your prayers, and your walking with us in faith. Your partnership enabled believers to come together, find encouragement, hear God's call afresh and to strengthen their commitment to Christ and to one another. From all of us, thank you. We go forward encouraged, challenged and full of gratitude for your partnership in this work.

My highlight was meeting with BMBs from all over the world. It's heart-warming to meet face to face and hear each others' stories.

The true body of Christ is something to behold and I beheld it in special ways this week.

It was a wonderful and impactful event... Without your support we would not have been able to participate, network, hear testimonies and enlarge our vision.

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