

Communiqué from the meeting of ARCIC III in Hong Kong

The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission has completed the second meeting of its new phase (ARCIC III), at the Mission to Seafarers in Kowloon, Hong Kong (3-10 May 2012).

The Commission, chaired by the Most Revd David Moxon (Anglican Archbishop of the New Zealand Dioceses) and the Most Revd Bernard Longley (Roman Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham) comprises nineteen theologians from a wide range of backgrounds across the world. According to the mandate given to it by the two Communion, the Commission is addressing interrelated issues: the Church as Communion, local and universal, and how in communion the local and universal Church come to discern right ethical teaching. The Commission has also been mandated to present the documents of ARCIC II for reception by the relevant authorities of both communions. Accordingly, the Commission is reviewing responses already received in order to prepare some elucidations, together with commentaries, which will enable the material of ARCIC II to be studied at all levels of the churches' life.

At this meeting, the Commission built upon the schema it had prepared at its first meeting. The schema seeks to address the interrelated ecclesiological and ethical questions of its mandate under four headings: the identity and mission of the Church; the patterning of the Church's life that undergirds local and universal communion; shortcomings in the churches which obscure the glory of God; and ethical discernment and teaching. Members presented papers in each of these areas which were discussed both in plenary and in small groups.

To assist its own understanding, the Commission is preparing case studies in three ethical areas: matters which historically once seemed settled but which, upon reflection, have come to be viewed quite differently by both traditions (slavery); issues on which Anglican and Roman Catholic teaching is at variance (divorce and remarriage, contraception); and evolving issues (a theology of work and the economy). It is not intended that the Commission will seek to resolve disputed ethical questions. Rather, its purpose is to analyze the means by which our two traditions have arrived at or are currently determining 'right ethical teaching'.

In due course the Commission plans to share its developing work with joint meetings of bishops and with local and regional dialogues between Anglicans and Roman Catholics (ARCs).

Through the week, the Commission reflected on the First Epistle of John, under the leadership of the co-chairs. Sunday's Gospel from John 15:1-8 set before the community the beautiful metaphor of Christ as the vine and his disciples as the branches, and members often returned to this theme in their discussions. The debate in Acts 15 (about the admission of the Gentiles to the Church) has both been read in the liturgy and discussed as an example of decision-making in the early Church.

The work of the Commission has been enriched by living in the ecumenical community of the Mission to Seafarers, run by Anglican, Roman Catholic, Danish and German Lutherans. Members of the Commission worshipped in its chapel, and learned from the Reverend Stephen Miller, Senior Chaplain, about its spiritual and practical mission with those often overlooked people who work aboard container and cargo ships. Their work was nourished by biblical reflection offered by the Most Revd Paul Kwong, Anglican Archbishop of Hong Kong. The Archbishop also generously hosted a dinner for the Commission, Cardinal John Tong, and other leaders of the local Anglican and Roman Catholic communities.

The Commission was delighted to meet with staff and students of Ming Hua Anglican Theological College and the Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Seminary, to share with them the history and work of ARCIC and to talk with them about their formation for ministry. On Sunday, the Commission worshipped at St John's Anglican Cathedral and, from Ms Holly Alan, learned of the Cathedral's outreach to migrant domestic workers. The Commission also benefitted from a presentation by the Reverend Catherine Graham (Coordinator for the Anglican Communion's Refugee and Migrant Network) about Anglican ministry to migrants at risk. She also referred to this ministry by Roman Catholic religious orders.

The Commission is particularly grateful to Archbishop Paul Kwong, the Revd Peter Koon (Secretary General), and his assistant Mr Hessler Lee, and other staff of the Provincial Office of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (the Anglican Church in Hong Kong) which hosted this meeting; to the Revd Catherine Graham; and to the Revd Stephen Miller (Anglican), Chaplain Fr Valan Arockiasamy SVD (Roman Catholic) and the staff and residents of the Mariners' Club, Kowloon.

The Commission will prepare further papers, expand the case studies, and continue its work in preparation for its next meeting April 29–May 6, 2013.

APPENDIX

MEMBERS OF ARCIC III

Co-Chairs

The Most Revd Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham, England

The Most Revd David Moxon, Bishop of Waikato and Archbishop of the Dioceses of New Zealand

Roman Catholics

The Revd Robert Christian OP, Angelicum University, Rome

The Most Revd Arthur Kennedy, auxiliary bishop, Archdiocese of Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Professor Paul D. Murray, Durham University, England

Professor Janet E. Smith, Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit, Michigan, USA

The Revd Professor Vimal Tirimanna CSsR, Alphonsianum University, Rome

The Very Revd Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB, Ampleforth Abbey, England

Revd Sister Teresa Okure SHCJ, Catholic Institute of West Africa, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

The Revd Adelbert Denaux, Dean, Tilburg School of Catholic Theology, Utrecht, The Netherlands

Anglicans

Canon Dr Paula Gooder, Birmingham, England

The Rt Revd Christopher Hill, Bishop of Guildford, England

The Revd Canon Professor Mark McIntosh, University of Durham, England.

The Rt Revd Nkosinathi Ndwandwe, Bishop Suffragan of Natal, Southern Area, South Africa

The Rt Revd Linda Nicholls, Area Bishop for Trent-Durham, Diocese of Toronto, Canada

The Revd Canon Michael Nai-Chiu Poon, Trinity Theological College, Singapore

The Revd Canon Professor Nicholas Sagovsky, London, England

The Revd Peter Sedgwick, St Michael's College, Llandaff, Wales

The Revd Charles Sherlock, Anglican Diocese of Bendigo, Australia

The Revd Canon Jonathan Goodall, Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative

Consultants

The Very Revd Peter Galadza, Sheptytsky Institute, St Paul University, Ottawa, Canada

The Revd Odair Pedroso Mateus, Faith and Order Secretariat, World Council of Churches

The work of the Commission is supported by the Co-Secretaries, Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan (Anglican Communion Office), Monsignor Mark Langham (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity) and Mr Neil Vigers (Administrative Assistant, Anglican Communion Office).