

## **Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity Faith and Order Communiqué, 8 December 2009**

Grateful for the gracious guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order held its first meeting in Canterbury, England from 1 to 8 December 2009.

The Commission has been established by the Lambeth Conference, the Primates' Meeting, and the Anglican Consultative Council. It builds on previous work done by the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations, and the Windsor Continuation Group. It reports to the Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion.

The Commission devoted this first meeting to developing a vision that gives expression to its mandate. It sees its role as being a communicative and connection-making body which models and promotes communication and connection-making in the Anglican Communion, within a confident and vibrant expression of our shared faith and life, participating by God's grace in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ.

In addition to outlining areas of longer-term work, the Commission committed itself to five immediate tasks:

1. to undertake a reflection on the Instruments of Communion and relationships among them;
2. to make a study of the definition and recognition of 'Anglican Churches' and develop guidelines for bishops in the Communion;
3. to provide supporting material to assist in promoting the Anglican Covenant;
4. to draft proposals for guided processes of 'reception' (how developments and agreements are evaluated, and how appropriate insights are brought into the life of the churches);
5. to consider the question of 'transitivity' (how ecumenical agreements in one region or Province may apply in others).

These tasks, which will be taken forward by working groups consulting electronically between meetings, aim to strengthen the unity, faith and order of the Communion.

An episcopal election in Los Angeles, which remains to be confirmed or rejected by The Episcopal Church, took place during the meeting and was discussed by the Commission. It noted the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury that 'the bishops of the Communion have collectively acknowledged that a period of gracious restraint in respect of actions which are contrary to the mind of the Communion is necessary if our bonds of mutual affection are to hold'. The Commission expressed the fervent hope that 'gracious restraint' would be exercised by The Episcopal Church in this instance.

Members of the Commission were enriched by sharing accounts of the life of the Anglican Church in each of their own contexts. The Commission also greatly valued an afternoon spent with the Archbishop of Canterbury, during which he shared his own vision for the work of the Commission and his hope that it might act creatively in addressing vital issues for the Church and the world.

Canterbury Cathedral sustained the Commission throughout the meeting through its ministry of prayer and hospitality. The Commission was also strengthened by sharing in daily eucharist and in Bible study. The Commission is grateful for the hospitality of the International Study Centre and the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral; of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the staff of Lambeth Palace; and of the Nikaeen Club which hosted a dinner at Lambeth. The Commission also expressed its gratitude to the staff of the Anglican Communion Office.

The next meeting will take place at the end of November 2010 in Cape Town, South Africa.

Participants:

The Most Revd Bernard Ntahoturi, Primate of Burundi and Chair of Commission  
The Rt Revd Dr Georges Titre Ande, Congo  
The Ven. Professor Dapo Asaju, Nigeria  
The Revd Canon Professor Paul Avis, England  
The Rt Revd Philip D Baji, Tanzania  
The Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut, World Council of Churches  
The Rt Revd Howard Gregory, West Indies  
The Revd Dr Katherine Grieb, Episcopal Church (USA)  
The Revd Canon Clement Janda, Sudan  
The Revd Sarah Rowland Jones, Southern Africa  
The Revd Dr Edison Muhindo Kalengyo, Uganda  
The Rt Revd Victoria Matthews, Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia  
The Revd Canon Dr Charlotte Methuen, England  
The Revd Dr Simon Oliver, Wales/England  
The Rt Revd Professor Stephen Pickard, Australia  
Dr Andrew Pierce, Ireland  
The Revd Canon Dr Michael Nai Chiu Poon, South East Asia  
The Revd Dr Jeremiah Guen Seok Yang, Korea  
The Rt Revd Tito Zavala, Bishop of Chile, Southern Cone  
The Revd Joanna Udal, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Secretary for Anglican Communion Affairs  
The Revd Canon Dr Alyson Barnett-Cowan, Director for Unity, Faith and Order  
Mr Neil Vigers, of the Anglican Communion Office.

**Mandate of the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order**

The Standing Commission shall have responsibility:

- to promote the deepening of Communion between the Churches of the Anglican Communion, and between those Churches and the other Churches and traditions of the Christian *oikumene*
- to advise the Provinces and the Instruments of Communion on all questions of ecumenical engagement, proposals for national, regional or international ecumenical agreement or schemes of co-operation and unity, as well as on questions touching Anglican Faith and Order
- to review developments in the areas of faith, order or unity in the Anglican Communion and among ecumenical partners, and to give advice to the Churches of the Anglican Communion or to the Instruments of Communion upon them, with the intention to promote common understanding, consistency, and convergence both in Anglican Communion affairs, and in ecumenical engagement
- to assist any Province with the assessment of new proposals in the areas of Unity, Faith and Order as requested.