

IASCUFO Communiqué 2017



The Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order met from 30 November to 7 December at Mount Lavinia, Colombo, Sri Lanka within the Church of Ceylon. The meeting was sustained by daily celebrations of the Eucharist, morning and evening prayer, and Bible study focusing on the book of Revelation. IASCUFO was delighted to welcome to their first meeting the Revd Nak-Hyon Joo, member of the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, and Professor Paulo Ueti, of the Anglican Alliance, as consultants, and the Revd Dr William Adam, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Ecumenical Adviser.

The Commission was generously hosted by St Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia, and its Warden, the Revd Marc P. Billimoria. Members of the Commission attended the College's beautiful Service of Nine Lessons and Carols on Sunday 3 December, the First Sunday of Advent, and the Christmas dinner that followed. That morning they attended the Eucharist at the Cathedral of Christ the Living Saviour, at which the Rt Revd Paul Slater, Bishop of Richmond in the Diocese of Leeds, a partner diocese of the Church of Ceylon, preached and presided. The Commission was also glad to accept the invitation of Bishop Dhiloraj Canagasabey to dinner at his home to meet members of the senior staff of the Diocese.

The Commission engaged with members of the Church of Ceylon and particularly its continued efforts towards closer relationship with the other Sri Lankan churches. The Commission offered advice on possible ways forward to enhance this shared mission and ministry. The Ecumenical Theological College of Lanka at Pilimatalawa, where Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist students study and prepare for ministry together, testified to the close relationships between these churches. Members of IASCUFO met the current students and had discussions with them. This encounter took place in the context of a visit to the Diocese of Kurunagala, where the Commission was able to celebrate the Eucharist at the cathedral. After a three-year vacancy, the diocese is preparing for the consecration of the sixth bishop of Kurunagala, the Venerable Keerthisiri Fernando, currently Archdeacon of Nuwara Eliya of the Diocese of Colombo, on 6 January 2018. The Commission received gracious hospitality at the home of one of its members, the Rt Revd Kumara Illangasinghe, the former Bishop of Kurunagala, and his wife Dr Lakmini Illangasinghe.

The Commission was deeply impressed by the Church of Ceylon's ecumenical and interreligious engagement, its prayerful and thoughtful ministry of reconciliation following

the conclusion in 2009 of the protracted civil war, and particularly by the way in which it functions as a point of integration between the Singhalese and Tamil communities.

IASCUFO reflected on the meeting of the Primates in October 2017. It received and responded to progress in global ecumenical dialogues and relationships, including those with the Lutheran, Methodist, Oriental Orthodox, Orthodox, Reformed and Roman Catholic Churches, as well as our full communion partners in the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht. IASCUFO also offered advice on developing Anglican-Methodist relationships in the USA and in England.

Looking towards ACC-17 and the 2020 Lambeth Conference, IASCUFO continued its work on both theological anthropology and the life of the Communion. It is hoped that reports will be produced. In its exploration of the nature of communion, the work of the Commission includes further refinement of previous work published on the Instruments of Communion; the significance of liturgy, prayer and worship for the unity, faith and order of the Anglican Communion; the nature of decision making at different levels of communion life; the development of criteria for handling controversy and conflict; and the conciliar nature of Anglican polity.

In the context of its on-going work on theological anthropology, the Commission reflected on the multi-faceted and complex nature of this topic. A draft document is in process for review by the Commission prior to its next meeting. Particular attention will be paid to fundamental theological anthropology, sexuality, human dignity and suffering, forced migration and poverty.

Members of IASCUFO wish to express their continuing deep gratitude to the Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut and the Revd Neil Vigers, staff for Unity, Faith and Order (Anglican Communion Office) for their outstanding and unstinting commitment to supporting and resourcing not only the work of IASCUFO but also many other dimensions of the life of the Anglican Communion and its ecumenical relationships.

In 2018 the Commission will meet at Durham Cathedral.

Christ is the morning star, who, when the night of this world is past, brings to his saints the promise of the light of life and opens everlasting day. The Venerable Bede

Present:

The Most Revd Bernard Ntshoturi (Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See) – Chair

The Rt Revd Professor Stephen Pickard (Anglican Church of Australia) – Vice Chair

The Revd Canon Dr Steven Abbarow (Church of the Province of South East Asia)

The Revd Dr William Adam (Lambeth Palace)

The Revd Professor Paul Avis (Church of England)

The Rt Revd Dr Howard Gregory (Church in the Province of the West Indies)

The Rt Revd Kumara Illangasinghe (Church of Ceylon)

The Rt Revd Victoria Matthews (Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia)

The Rt Revd William Mchombo (Church of the Province of Central Africa)

The Revd Canon Professor Charlotte Methuen (Church of England)

The Revd Canon Professor Simon Oliver (Church of England)

Professor Andrew Pierce (Church of Ireland)

The Revd Canon Dr Sarah Rowland Jones (Church in Wales)

The Revd Professor Jeremiah Yang (Anglican Church of Korea)

Professor Paulo Ueti (consultant) (Anglican Alliance; Brazil)

The Revd Nak-Hyon Joo (consultant) (International Anglican Liturgical Consultation; Korea)

Staff:

The Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut Director for Unity, Faith and Order

The Revd Neil Vigers, Programme Executive, Unity, Faith and Order

Apologies were received from:

The Rt Revd Dr Victor Atta-Baffoe (consultant, Church of the Province of West Africa)

The Rt Revd Michael Lewis (consultant, Jerusalem and the Middle East)

Photo credit: Neil Vigers

Appendix:

IASCUFO's mandate defines and directs its work. The Commission has 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.