

## Caribbean Phase Communiqué 2003

A Caribbean phase of international conversations between Anglicans and Baptists was held in Nassau from 26-28 January 2003. This regional meeting follows four previous phases held in Norwich (for Europe) in 2000, Yangon (for Asia/Pacific) in 2001, Nairobi (for Africa), in 2002, and Santiago, Chile (for Latin America) earlier in January 2003. Participants came from Bahamas, Barbados, Haiti, Jamaica, and Trinidad & Tobago, representing their respective Churches and joined the members of the "continuation committee" which is conducting these regional gatherings on behalf of the Baptist World Alliance and the Anglican Communion.

On the first evening, the Most Revd Drexel Wellington Gomez, Archbishop of Nassau and Primate of the Church of the Province of the West Indies and The Revd Dr Peter Pinder, Baptist Regional Secretary for the Caribbean welcomed the delegates on behalf of the local churches.

The Anglican and Baptist representatives gave an overview of the life of their respective communions in the Caribbean. Eight substantial papers were presented on *Anglican Life in the Caribbean*, *Baptist Life in the Caribbean*, *Colonisation, Liberation and the Mission of the Church in the Caribbean* (Baptist and Anglican), *Eucharistic Theology* (Baptist and Anglican), *Anglican Identity*, and *Baptist Identity*.

The plenary discussion drew together rich insights from the Caribbean context and related them to the themes emerging from previous regional conversations, namely: continuity and story; recognition and acceptance; contextual mission and ministry; baptism and Christian initiation; membership and community; oversight and episcopacy; and confessing the faith. Many common concerns from Baptists and Anglicans were shared with regard to the "Caribbeanization" of witness and worship. In reflecting on the story of Baptist and Anglican life in the Caribbean, many perspectives were shared on the ways to choose which external influences to welcome and which to resist. The meeting included shared prayer and devotions conducted by Baptist and Anglicans and also Holy Communion in Holy Trinity Anglican Church. The meeting was hosted by the Diocese of Bahamas and Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Nassau. The participants were guests for dinner at the home of Archbishop and Mrs Gomez and also at the home of Mrs Ruby Nottage and Mr Kendall Nottage.

The ABIC is the official instrument of the Churches of the Anglican Communion and the Baptist World Alliance engaged in theological discussions which have the following objectives:

1. To enable Anglican/Baptists to learn from each other and to deepen understanding of relationships between our two communions in the light of their histories.
2. To share with each other how we understand the Christian faith and to work toward a common confession of the Apostolic Faith.
3. To identify issues of doctrine and the nature of the church to be explored further in possible future conversations.
4. To look for ways to co-operate in mission and community activities and increase our fellowship and common witness to the Gospel.

The next phase will be held in September 2003 in North America. There is a continuing committee consisting of four Anglicans and four Baptists who will draft a report following the regional meetings to be submitted to the Anglican Consultative Council and the Baptist World Alliance by 2005.

The following persons participated in the Nassau meeting:

**Anglicans:**

Continuation Committee:

Bruce Matthews (Co-Chair), Canada

John Baycroft (Co-Secretary), Anglican Communion Office

Paul Avis, England

Caribbean Representatives:

Ranfurly Brown, Bahamas

Burnet Cherisol, Haiti

Knolly Clarke, Trinidad & Tobago

Drexel Gomez, Bahamas

Sehon Goodridge, Windward Islands

Rubie Nottage, Bahamas

Monrielle Williams, Barbados

**Baptists:**

Continuation Committee:

Paul Fiddes, (Co-Chair), England

Tony Cupit, (Co-Secretary), Baptist World Alliance

Ken Manley, Australia

Caribbean Representatives:

Cawley Bolt, Jamaica

Neville Callam, Jamaica

Beth Stewart, Bahamas

Peter Pinder, Bahamas

William Thompson, Bahamas

(Timothy Stewart, Bahamas)

**Nassau, 28 January 2003**