

Communiqué of the Anglican-Jewish dialogue commission

The fifth meeting of the Anglican-Jewish Commission of the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chief Rabbinate of Israel was hosted by the latter, with hospitality provided by the American Jewish Committee at its Jerusalem premises, Beit Moses, on 14th and 15th June 2011/Sivan 12-13, 5771.

The Commission's mandate is taken from the provisions of the joint declaration of the Archbishop and the Chief Rabbis at Lambeth Palace on 6th September 2006 and confirmed at their second meeting in Jerusalem on 31st October 2007

At the opening welcomes, joy was expressed at the renewal of the meeting of the bilateral Commission which was acknowledged as providing both mutual enrichment and much appreciated friendship. On behalf of the Jewish delegation Rabbi David Rosen congratulated the Most Reverend Michael Jackson on his appointment as Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough.

The Archbishop thanked the hosts and brought greetings from the Most Reverend Dr. Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury.

The theme of the Commission's meeting was the Psalms and their centrality in both Traditions. The Commission noted that arguably no part of scripture unites us as does the Book of Psalms, while at the same time giving voice to an all-embracing universality.

The Anglican paper presented by Mrs. Clare Amos highlighted the dialectic of whether the Psalms should be considered as 'our words to God' or 'God's words to us' and reviewed the changing place and role of Psalms in Anglican liturgy and life. In response, Chief Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen examined the place of David as temporal and spiritual leader and how this was reflected in specific Psalms.

The papers and the ensuing discussion reflected on the way in which Psalms may serve as a calibrating resource to curb human arrogance and combat despair. Furthermore, in highlighting the creative tensions between the transcendent and the immanent, the Psalms demonstrate both the constancy and intimacy of the Divine Presence.

Above all, the participants emphasized how much they were enriched by the explorations of scripture and liturgy that they shared. One discovery was the parallel liturgical uses of verses from the Psalms, which provided deeper insights into the nature and possibilities of the text. For example, in the invitation to prayer we both use: "Open Thou our lips and our mouths shall tell Thy praise" (Psalm 51). The cyclical use of Psalms as the bedrock of liturgical tradition was also noted, whether focused on the individual or on the community.

The programme included a visit to the Shrine of the Book and the Judaica exhibition at the Israel Museum, where the Commission was received by the Director of the Museum Mr. James Snyder, and by the curator of the Shrine of the Book Dr. Adolfo

Roitman and their colleagues. This visit served to highlight the shared scriptural patrimony and its relation with Jewish tradition and life.

Both delegations updated one another on their respective inter faith activities and initiatives, and discussed matters of common concern. The participants anticipated with enthusiasm the next meeting in 2012.

The Commission warmly commends this approach to local inter-faith groups.

The Most Revd Michael Jackson. Emeritus Chief Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen

The following are members of the Commission:

Delegation of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel

Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen, Emeritus Chief Rabbi of Haifa
Rabbi Professor Daniel Sperber, Bar Ilan University
Rabbi David Brodman, Chief Rabbi of Savyon
Rabbi David Rosen CBE, KSG, American Jewish Committee
Mr Oded Wiener, Director General, the Chief Rabbinate of Israel

Delegation of the Archbishop of Canterbury

The Most Rev. Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough
The Rt. Rev. Suheil Dawani, Bishop of Jerusalem and the Middle East
Mrs. Clare Amos, Director of Theological Studies, Anglican Communion
Dr. Jane Clements, Consultant in Christian-Jewish Relations
The Ven. Dr. Michael Ipgrave OBE, Archdeacon of Southwark
The Rev. Dr. Toby Howarth Secretary for Inter Religious Affairs to the Archbishop of Canterbury