

IASCUFO Communiqué 2016



Photo credit ACO/ Neil Vigers

The Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order met at Larnaca, Cyprus, from 2 to 7 December, in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, Province of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East. The meeting was sustained by daily celebrations of the Eucharist, prayer, and Bible study focusing on the book of Isaiah. IASCUFO was delighted to welcome to their first meeting the Rt Revd Anthony Poggo, Archbishop of Canterbury's Adviser for Anglican Communion Affairs; the Rt Revd Dr Victor Atta-Baffoe, Diocese of Cape Coast, Ghana; and the Revd Canon Dr Steven Abbarow, Vice-Principal of Seminari Theoloji Malaysia. Members deeply regretted the absence of the Revd Professor Katherine Grieb in consequence of the Primates' 'requiring that for a period of three years The Episcopal Church ... while participating in the internal bodies of the Anglican Communion ... will not take part in decision making on any issues pertaining to doctrine or polity' (Communiqué of the meeting of Anglican Primates, January 2016). Professor Grieb's contribution to the work of IASCUFO has been very highly valued.

The Commission was pleased to welcome the Rt Revd Michael Lewis, Bishop of Cyprus and the Gulf, as a guest for one day of its meeting. Members of IASCUFO profited greatly from his contribution to their discussions, his sermon during the parish Eucharist at St Helena's Larnaca on the Second Sunday of Advent, and his guided tour of the Orthodox Cathedral of St Lazarus and the Muslim shrine and pilgrimage site, Hala Sultan Tekke. The Commission was also appreciative of the hospitality and support offered by the Ven Dr John Holdsworth and the Revd Geoff Graham in Larnaca and the Provincial Secretary, Mrs Georgia Katsantonis.

IASCUFO's mandate defines and directs its work. The Standing 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.

IASCUFO read with profound appreciation the Common Declaration of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope on 5 October 2016 in Rome. The Declaration, together with a commentary produced by IASCUFO on this significant document, are appended below. Taking note of the Primates' Meeting and Gathering in January 2016, IASCUFO reflected on its ecclesiological significance. The Commission also received the Resolutions passed by Anglican Consultative Council (ACC-16), in Lusaka, Zambia, in April 2016, which guided and helped to resource its work.

The Commission was glad to hear of and respond to progress in ecumenical dialogues and relationships, including: Anglican-Lutheran, Anglican-Old Catholic, Anglican-Oriental Orthodox, Anglican-Orthodox, Anglican-Reformed, and Anglican-Roman Catholic. Reports were also received on the Central Committee Meeting of the World Council of Churches and the 2016 meeting of the coordinating committee of the Global Christian Forum. IASCUFO drafted protocols for the appointment of members to ecumenical and other Communion-wide commissions. Looking ahead to the Luther anniversary in 2017, IASCUFO encourages Anglicans across the Communion to engage with ecumenical partners in this commemoration. In addition, in response to the ACC-16 resolution that 'the potential for dialogues with Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches' be explored, IASCUFO has proposed a process of information-gathering about relationships between Anglicans and these churches. A similar process in relation to African instituted churches will be explored in conjunction with the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa.

Looking towards the 2020 Lambeth Conference, IASCUFO continues to work on both theological anthropology and the life of the Communion, with the intention of producing reports for ACC-17. The Commission's work on theological anthropology emphasises our common humanity in the image of God, and engages with the Church's mission to a broken and hurting world. IASCUFO's work on Communion Life continues to explore how we as Anglicans can walk together in the Gospel with integrity in the face of differences and disagreements.

Members of IASCUFO wish to express their 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.

Present:

The Most Revd Bernard Ntahoturi (Anglican Church of Burundi) – 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 Rt Revd Dr Victor Atta-Baffoe (Church of the Province of West Africa)
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 Dr Charlotte Methuen (Scottish Episcopal Church / 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)

Staff:

The Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut (Anglican Communion Office)
The Rt Revd Anthony Poggo (Lambeth Palace)
The Revd Neil Vigers (Anglican Communion Office)

Apologies were received from:

The Revd Dr Jeremiah Yang (Anglican Church of Korea)
The Revd Sonal Christian (Church of North India)

Common Declaration of His Holiness Pope Francis and His Grace Justin Welby Archbishop of Canterbury

Fifty years ago our predecessors, Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey met in this city hallowed by the ministry and blood of the Apostles Peter and Paul. Subsequently, Pope John Paul II with Archbishop Robert Runcie, and later with Archbishop George Carey, and Pope Benedict XVI with Archbishop Rowan Williams, prayed together here in this Church of Saint Gregory on the Caelian Hill from where Pope Gregory sent Augustine to evangelise the Anglo-Saxon people. On pilgrimage to the tombs of these apostles and holy forebears, Catholics and Anglicans recognize that we are heirs of the treasure of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the call to share that treasure with the whole world. We have received the Good News of Jesus Christ through the holy lives of men and women who preached the Gospel in word and deed and we have been commissioned, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, to be Christ's witnesses "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1: 8). We are united in the conviction that "the ends of the earth" today, is not only a geographical term, but a summons to take the saving message of the Gospel particularly to those on the margins and the peripheries of our societies.

In their historic meeting in 1966, Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Ramsey established the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission to pursue a serious theological dialogue which, "founded on the Gospels and on the ancient common traditions, may lead to that unity in truth, for which Christ prayed". Fifty years later we give thanks for the achievements of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, which has examined historically divisive doctrines from a fresh perspective of mutual respect and charity. Today we give thanks in particular for the documents of ARCIC II which will be appraised by us, and we await the findings of ARCIC III as it navigates new contexts and new challenges to our unity.

Fifty years ago our predecessors recognized the "serious obstacles" that stood in the way of a restoration of complete faith and sacramental life between us. Nevertheless, they set out undeterred, not knowing what steps could be taken along the way, but in fidelity to the Lord's prayer that his disciples be one. Much progress has been made concerning many areas that have kept us apart. Yet new circumstances have presented new disagreements among us, particularly regarding the ordination of women and more recent questions regarding human sexuality. Behind these differences lies a perennial question about how authority is exercised in the Christian community. These are today some of the concerns that constitute serious obstacles to our full unity. While, like our predecessors, we ourselves do not yet see solutions to the obstacles before us, we are undeterred. In our trust and joy in the Holy Spirit we are confident that dialogue and engagement with one another will deepen our understanding and help us to discern the mind of Christ for his Church. We trust in God's grace and providence, knowing that the Holy Spirit will open new doors and lead us into all truth (cf. John 16: 13).

These differences we have named cannot prevent us from recognizing one another as brothers and sisters in Christ by reason of our common baptism. Nor should they ever hold us back from discovering and rejoicing in the deep Christian faith and holiness we find within each other's traditions. These differences must not lead to a lessening of our ecumenical endeavours. Christ's prayer at the Last Supper that all might be one (cf. John 17: 20-23) is as imperative for his disciples today as it was at that moment of his impending passion, death and resurrection, and consequent birth of his Church. Nor should our differences come in the way of our common prayer: not only can we pray together, we must pray together, giving voice to our shared faith and joy in the Gospel of Christ, the ancient Creeds, and the power of God's love, made present in the Holy Spirit, to overcome all sin and division. And so, with our predecessors, we urge our clergy and faithful not to neglect or undervalue that certain yet imperfect communion that we already share.

Wider and deeper than our differences are the faith that we share and our common joy in the Gospel. Christ prayed that his disciples may all be one, "so that the world might believe"

(John 17: 21). The longing for unity that we express in this Common Declaration is closely tied to the desire we share that men and women come to believe that God sent his Son, Jesus, into the world to save the world from the evil that oppresses and diminishes the entire creation. Jesus gave his life in love, and rising from the dead overcame even death itself. Christians who have come to this faith, have encountered Jesus and the victory of his love in their own lives, and are impelled to share the joy of this Good News with others. Our ability to come together in praise and prayer to God and witness to the world rests on the confidence that we share a common faith and a substantial measure of agreement in faith.

The world must see us witnessing to this common faith in Jesus by acting together. We can, and must, work together to protect and preserve our common home: living, teaching and acting in ways that favour a speedy end to the environmental destruction that offends the Creator and degrades his creatures, and building individual and collective patterns of behaviour that foster a sustainable and integral development for the good of all. We can, and must, be united in a common cause to uphold and defend the dignity of all people. The human person is demeaned by personal and societal sin. In a culture of indifference, walls of estrangement isolate us from others, their struggles and their suffering, which also many of our brothers and sisters in Christ today endure. In a culture of waste, the lives of the most vulnerable in society are often marginalised and discarded. In a culture of hate we see unspeakable acts of violence, often justified by a distorted understanding of religious belief. Our Christian faith leads us to recognise the inestimable worth of every human life, and to honour it in acts of mercy by bringing education, healthcare, food, clean water and shelter and always seeking to resolve conflict and build peace. As disciples of Christ we hold human persons to be sacred, and as apostles of Christ we must be their advocates.

Fifty years ago Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Ramsey took as their inspiration the words of the apostle: "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3: 13-14). Today, "those things which are behind" – the painful centuries of separation – have been partially healed by fifty years of friendship. We give thanks for the fifty years of the Anglican Centre in Rome dedicated to being a place of encounter and friendship. We have become partners and companions on our pilgrim journey, facing the same difficulties, and strengthening each other by learning to value the gifts which God has given to the other, and to receive them as our own in humility and gratitude.

We are impatient for progress that we might be fully united in proclaiming, in word and deed, the saving and healing gospel of Christ to all people. For this reason we take great encouragement from the meeting during these days of so many Catholic and Anglican bishops of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) who, on the basis of all that they have in common, which generations of ARCIC scholars have painstakingly unveiled, are eager to go forward in collaborative mission and witness to the "ends of the earth". Today we rejoice to commission them and send them forth in pairs as the Lord sent out the seventy-two disciples. Let their ecumenical mission to those on the margins of society be a witness to all of us, and let the message go out from this holy place, as the Good News was sent out so many centuries ago, that Catholics and Anglicans will work together to give voice to our common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to bring relief to the suffering, to bring peace where there is conflict, to bring dignity where it is denied and trampled upon.

In this Church of Saint Gregory the Great, we earnestly invoke the blessings of the Most Holy Trinity on the continuing work of ARCIC and IARCCUM, and on all those who pray for and contribute to the restoration of unity between us.

Rome, 5 October 2016
His Grace Justin Welby
His Holiness Francis

Commentary from IASCUFO on the “Common Declaration” by Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury

On 5 October 2016, Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, signed a “Common Declaration” (CD) during a celebration of Vespers at the Church of Saint Gregory in Rome, the Church from which Pope Gregory sent Augustine as a missionary to the Anglo-Saxon people. This marks the fiftieth anniversary of the meeting between Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey in 1966, which led to the establishing of the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), and to the setting up of International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM), and which has also inspired meetings between subsequent popes and archbishops of Canterbury.

Together, the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury affirm the deepening communion between the Anglican and Catholic churches, and in particular their shared call “to take the saving message of the Gospel particularly to those on the margins and the peripheries of our societies” (CD, para 1). They affirm the painstaking theological work of ARCIC, and commission Anglican and Catholic bishops to work and witness together in an ecumenical mission to those on particularly the margins of society. They commit themselves and their churches to work together even in the realisation that differences still divide us.

The Inter-Anglican Standing Commission for Unity, Faith and Order welcomes the Common Declaration, and in particular its affirmation of the achievements of ARCIC and of the witness of IARCCUM. The focus on mission to those on the peripheries of our societies is especially welcome at this time. The Pope and the Archbishop also draw attention to the urgency of addressing the impact of climate change, “the environmental destruction that offends the Creator and degrades his creatures” and encouraging “individual and collective patterns of behaviour that foster a sustainable and integral development for the good of all” (CD, para 6).

In the light of the Common Declaration, IASCUFO believes that it would be useful for IARCCUM to revisit the vision and proposals laid out in the 1967 Malta Report, which laid the foundations for the establishment of ARCIC.¹ This report recommended:

In every region where each Communion has a hierarchy, we propose an annual joint meeting of either the whole or some considerable representation of the two hierarchies (Malta Report, para 8).

Such meetings might help shared decision-making as new issues arise, and help to avoid their becoming divisive. As the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury affirm: “Wider and deeper than our differences are the faith that we share and our common joy in the Gospel” (CD, para 5).

The Pope and the Archbishop affirm “our shared faith and joy in the Gospel of Christ, the ancient Creeds, and the power of God’s love, made present in the Holy Spirit.” Fifty years ago, the Malta Report recorded “with great thankfulness”:

our common faith in God our Father, in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit; our common baptism in the one Church of God; our sharing of the holy Scriptures, of the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds, the Chalcedonian definition, and the teaching of the Fathers; our common Christian inheritance for many centuries with its living traditions of liturgy, theology, spirituality, Church order, and mission. (Malta Report, para 3)

The report observed further: “Divergences since the sixteenth century have arisen not so much from the substance of this inheritance as from our separate ways of receiving it” (Malta

¹ http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/angl-comm-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_19680102_malta-report_en.html.

Report, para 4). As Anglicans and Catholics move forward together, it is important, as the Pope and the Archbishop urge, “not to neglect or undervalue that certain yet imperfect communion that we already share” (CD, para 4). This is significant for not only for bishops but for all clergy and people. Anglicans and Catholics throughout the church must stand and act together: “The world must see us witnessing to this common faith in Jesus by acting together” (CD, para 6).

IASCUFO greatly values these affirmations of communion in awareness of difference. In particular, the Pope and the Archbishop profess:

These differences we have named cannot prevent us from recognizing one another as brothers and sisters in Christ by reason of our common baptism. Nor should they ever hold us back from discovering and rejoicing in the deep Christian faith and holiness we find within each other’s traditions.

The Common Declaration here offers helpful insights into relationships not only with Catholics and our other ecumenical partners, but also within the Anglican Communion.

IASCUFO encourages all Anglicans to study this declaration, and to consider how they might affirm communion even where there is disagreement.

IASCUFO
Larnaca, Cyprus
Advent 2016