

The Anglican–Oriental Orthodox International Commission Communiqué, 2023



The Anglican–Oriental Orthodox International Commission held its tenth meeting in Jordan from the 24th to the 27th October 2023, thanking the Most Revd Dr Hosam Naoum, Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, for his gracious hospitality.

Consideration had been given to the appropriateness of travelling to Jordan in a time of war in the wider region. It was decided that the meeting should go ahead, as a sign of solidarity with the local Churches.

The Commission prayed for peace and justice in the region, expressing its deep solidarity with its people. Archbishop Hosam joined a session of the meeting online, briefed the Commission on the situation across the region, prayed with the members and referred to his joint [appeal](#) with the Archbishop of Canterbury for prayer for peace and justice. He characterised the conflicts in the region as a potential existential threat to the Churches.

During the dialogue, the Commission engaged in constructive and insightful discussions on crucial aspects of Christian witness and the challenges that confront our communities and their continued existence in some parts of the world.

The original programme of work for the dialogue, set out in 2001, was reviewed, and the opportunity was taken to clarify the way ahead for the work and focus of the Commission in the light of unresolved issues in the Anglican Communion.

Looking to the future, the Commission emphasized the importance of continuing dialogue and cooperation. It decided to refocus the next phase of its work, addressing the ways in which both communions live out their faith in the world's changing contexts. Areas for future work will include the theological and biblical imperative of Christian life and witness, responsible stewardship, engagement with an often indifferent or hostile world, the patterning of faith and discipleship, and response to migration and the displacement of peoples.

The Commission visited the Baptismal Site at the Jordan River, geographically the lowest place on the earth's surface. From here emerged the new humanity which Christians share through baptism into the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Those experiencing great trials can therefore know that the Gospel addresses the depths of every human need.

The Commission went on to hear news from the Churches of their experiences, and in particular of experience of oppression, persecution, conflict and war in countries like Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Libya, Sudan and Syria. It heard first-hand of the struggles and forced displacement of Armenians from Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh). The Commission expressed its solidarity with sisters and brothers in these regions and prayed for them.

The Commission was welcomed to the Church of the Redeemer in Amman and had the privilege of praying and sharing a meal with local Anglicans and members of ecumenical partner churches.

The Commission continues to ask for God's guidance and protection for the Christians of the region, along with people of all faiths and none, as they navigate profound challenges. Together, the Commission affirms its commitment to stand as a source of support and strength for the Churches of the region and their neighbours, holding them close in its prayers as they persevere with resilience and Faith.

The Commission expresses its hope that the dialogue will continue to bear fruit in the pursuit of greater understanding, co-operation and journeying to the realisation of our Lord's prayer: 'that they may be one' (John 17.11).

27th October 2023

Present at the meeting:

Anglicans

The Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, Church of Ireland (Co-Chair)
Dr Liza Anderson, Episcopal Church (USA)
The Rt Revd Anthony Ball, Province of Alexandria, Consultant
The Most Revd Dr Samy Shehata, Province of Alexandria
The Ven. Dr Edward Simonton OGS, Anglican Church of Canada
The Revd Canon Dr William Taylor, Church of England
The Revd Neil Vigers, Anglican Communion Office (Co-Secretary)
Dr Belle Tindall (minute taker at the meeting)

Oriental Orthodox

Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria

His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos of London, United Kingdom (Co-Chair)

Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch

His Eminence Archbishop Severios Roger Akhrass, Lebanon (Co-Secretary)
His Eminence Archbishop Polycarpus Augin Aydin, The Netherlands

Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church – Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin – Armenia

His Grace Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

His Eminence Metropolitan Stephanos, United Kingdom

The next meeting of the Commission will take place in October 2024, hosted by the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

Not present at the meeting

Fr Dr K. M. George
Fr Dr Pishoy Wasfy
The Very Rev Fr Hrant Tahanian
Dr Christopher Wells