

# Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity Faith and Order (IASCUFO)

Communiqué, 15 December 2023



The Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order (IASCUFO) gathered in Cairo, Egypt, for its annual meeting from 8-14 December, welcomed by the Episcopal/Anglican Province of Alexandria. The Commission is grateful to the Most Rev. Dr. Samy Shehata, Archbishop of Alexandria, and his staff for their warm hospitality and for the opportunity to learn about the work and witness of this newly created, rapidly developing province, spread across 10 nations. The Commission worshipped daily in All Saints' Cathedral and joined the cathedral congregation on Sunday 10 December.

IASCUFO's mandate encompasses a wide range of responsibilities:

- 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 world;
- 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 questions touching Anglican Faith and Order;
- to review developments in the areas of Unity, Faith and Order 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.

The Commission began its meeting with a brief study of Ephesians 4:1-16, which helped focus the week's work. God sustains the unity of the Church as a gift in the one body of his Son. At the same time, God calls the Church to a deeper unity "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (vv. 2-3). On both counts, the diversity of ministries in the Church equips the saints and builds up the body, "until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity" (v. 13). "Speaking the truth in love," therefore, "we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (v. 15).

The primary focus of the Commission at this meeting was the theological exploration of "structure and decision-making to help address our differences in the Anglican Communion," as requested by the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) in February 2023 ([ACC-18, Resolution 3 \(a\)](#)). ACC-18 also asked, in the same resolution, that "any proposals from IASCUFO that may impact the ACC constitution... be brought for full discussion at ACC-19." A working group of the Commission presented a review of the history of Anglican Faith and Order in light of the rapid development and expansion of the Communion, contemporary disagreements and divisions, and our longstanding theological, ecumenical and ecclesiological commitments. Over the last half century, the ACC and the Primates' Meeting have sought, along with the Lambeth Conference and the Archbishop of Canterbury, to harness the energies of the expanding and increasingly diverse Anglican family, and to enable the autonomy and interdependence of member churches. All these four Instruments of Communion have also, at various times, called for continuing structural reform and development in order to preserve Anglican identity, address Anglican disagreements, and rearticulate the Anglican commitment to the full visible unity of the Church. In this light, IASCUFO has revisited the landmark, imaginative resolution of the 1930 Lambeth Conference ([res. 49](#)), which set out "the nature and status of the Anglican Communion" at that point in time, in what would prove to be the last years of the British Empire. Nearly 100 years on, IASCUFO believes that the Communion will be well served by an updated, equally imaginative description of its status, both to account for the current nature and structures of the Communion and to accommodate the needs of all member churches, set within a faithful vision for the future. The Commission will complete its report, alongside a set of proposals, in advance of the Primates' Meeting in Rome, April 2024.

The Commission also conducted its annual review of all ecumenical relationships and commitments of the Anglican Communion, spanning dialogues with the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Oriental Orthodox churches, the World Methodist Council, and the Pentecostal World Fellowship; cooperative missiological work via pairs of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops in the IARCCUM initiative (a second pilgrimage of which is planned for 24 pairs of bishops in January 2024, from Rome to Canterbury), and a similarly-structured pairing of leaders with the Lutheran World Federation (ALICUM); and the multilateral work of the World Council of Churches, the Global Christian Forum, and the Joint Declaration on

the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) Steering Committee. The Commission studied carefully the latest agreed text of the International Commission for Anglican–Orthodox Theological Dialogue (ICAOTD), entitled *Organ Donation: A Hope-Filled Gift* and will feed back comments to the dialogue team.

The Commission reviewed the work of the Commission for Theological Education in the Anglican Communion (CTEAC), the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation (IALC) and the Anglican Communion Legal Advisers’ Network (ACLAN); agreed that a member of the Commission will serve as a “focal point” to liaise with the work of the Anglican Communion at the United Nations; and discussed several initiatives underway to mark the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Council of Nicaea in 2025. The Commission suggests that the Primates’ Meeting in April consider the potential for a pan-Anglican celebration of the Nicæan anniversary.

As ever, the members of IASCUFO rejoice in the work with which the Commission has been entrusted in service of the Anglican Communion and as an offering to the wider body of Christ. Their prayer remains that the Lord of the harvest will enable all Anglicans to be faithful in their mission and ministry, and will give the growth — thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold — in his good time (Mark 4.20; cf. 1 Cor 3.6). The next in person meeting of IASCUFO will take place in December 2024.

*Present at the Cairo meeting:*

The Rt Revd Dr Graham Tomlin, Chair (England)  
The Rt Revd Dr Steven Abbarow (Malaysia)  
Dr Joanildo Burity (Brazil)  
The Rt Revd Dr Titus Chung (Singapore)  
The Rt Rev Dr Dalcy Badeli Dlamini (Eswatini)  
The Revd Dr Margret Kalaiselvi (India)  
The Revd Dr John Rogers (Barbados)  
Mr Carlos Romero (Chile)  
The Most Revd Dr Samy Shehata (Egypt)  
The Revd Dr Katherine Sonderegger (United States of America)  
The Rt Revd Eugene Sutton (United States of America)  
The Rt Revd Dr Richard Treloar (Australia)  
The Rev Dr Andrew Atherstone, *Consultant* (England)  
The Revd Dr Nak-Hyon Joseph Joo, *IALC Consultant* (South Korea)  
Canon Andrew Khoo, *Consultant* (Malaysia)  
The Very Revd Canon Sammy Wainaina, *Observer* (Lambeth Palace)

*Anglican Communion Office Staff:*

The Rt Revd Anthony Poggo, *Secretary General*  
Dr Paulo Ueti, *Consultant*  
The Revd Neil Vigers, *Programme Executive*  
Dr Christopher Wells, *Director of Unity, Faith and Order*

*Present online for part of the meeting:*

The Very Revd Dr Sarah Rowland Jones (Wales)

The Rt Revd Dr Paul Korir (Kenya)

The Rt Revd Joseph Royal (Canada)

The Revd Dr Stephen Spencer (Anglican Communion Office)

*Apologies from:*

The Most Revd Dr Georges Titre Ande (Congo)

The Rt Revd Dr Joseph Galgalo (Kenya)

The Revd Jeanne Françoise Ndimubakunzi (Burundi)

Mr Darren Oliver, *Consultant* (England)