

**Supplement to *The Nairobi-Cairo Proposals (Rome, 2025)***  
by the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order

*Executive summary*

IASCUFO's *Nairobi-Cairo Proposals* (NCPs), published in Advent 2024, envision the Church afresh as truly one, holy, catholic, and apostolic so that Anglicans may carry the hope of a new creation into the world. The Anglican Communion long ago committed itself to answering God's call to unity and to finding our place in the Body of Christ. What happens between us as we acknowledge our interdependence matters for our integrity and effectiveness locally, regionally, and globally. The following supplement to the NCPs, developed at a meeting in Rome in December 2025, summarises IASCUFO's learning as we have listened to responses to our paper and suggests several revisions for the consideration of ACC-19, meeting in June/July 2026.

*The Nairobi-Cairo Proposals* boil down to three urgent calls for our common life:

- **Acknowledge developments in the structures of the Communion since 1930.** When the Lambeth Conference of 1930 offered its description of the Anglican Communion, it presumed an understanding of all Anglican churches as gathered round the Church of England as mother. This has not been the case since at least 1968. All Anglican churches, including the Church of England, are now sisters. The Constitution of the ACC governs the Communion's membership. In view of these facts, an updated description of the Communion will enable all Anglicans to speak truly and honestly about the faith, ministry, and mission that we share.
- **Acknowledge that communion has been damaged between some churches, but that real communion remains, both as God's gift and as something Christ calls us to intensify.** All the churches of the Anglican Communion are bound together, despite our differences, in living relationships with one another, aided by the Instruments of Communion. We are not defined by the decisions of any single member church. This fact enables us to articulate our communion in various ways, and to walk together to the highest degree possible. It encourages us to be honest about our divisions and make room for one another in love.
- **Ensure the Communion's leadership looks like the Communion.** This means recognising the fact that the Anglican Consultative Council and Primates' Meeting, as well as the Lambeth Conference, complement and complete the unique ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Communion. The ACC incorporates lay voices and leadership: we propose that these contributions be enhanced. The regional primates already assist the Archbishop of Canterbury in his or her ministry in the Communion: we propose that the collegial character of this shared ministry be developed.

To acknowledge the need for change and act accordingly will enhance the integrity of our witness, promote collegiality between our leaders, and amplify Anglican voices in both ecumenical and secular settings. It will enable us to shed some of the baggage of colonialism while celebrating a shared theological and sacramental inheritance, to which the ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury bears witness. And it will encourage all Anglican churches, even amid serious disagreements, to speak and embody a word of hope and healing in a world riven by violence and despair.

## Introduction

1. Since the publication of *The Nairobi-Cairo Proposals* (NCPs) in Advent 2024, the membership of the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order (IASCUFO) has carefully considered the formal responses we have received. IASCUFO has continued to consult regularly with the Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council, which includes the Standing Committee of the Primates' Meeting, also referred to as the "regional primates." We have also spoken several times with the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah Mullally, as well as with ecumenical partners.

2. At our [meeting in Rome](#) in December 2025 we reflected on these conversations alongside consideration of a recently published paper by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, entitled *The Bishop of Rome: Primacy and Synodality in the Ecumenical Dialogues* (2024). We saw that the Catholic Church is re-casting its theology of the papacy, including the claims of the First Vatican Council (1869-1870), in the light of changing circumstances and new discernments, not least with other Christians and churches.

3. The Anglican Communion similarly is engaged in a reconsideration and re-casting of its history and its claims in order faithfully to respond to the Spirit's call to unity. The Anglican Communion has changed enormously in the last 100 years, especially through its emerging understanding of the equality of all member churches. No member is more "indispensable" than others (1 Cor. 12:22), though old colonial habits are hard to break on all sides. All are sisters, and all are encouraged to invest in their communion, one with another.

4. The NCPs recount the history and theology of these developments in the Anglican Communion by mapping them onto an understanding of the Church as persistently one, holy, catholic, and apostolic (see NCP, §§24-71). Founded in this faith and order, the NCPs seek to offer a fruitful framework and provisional direction of travel for the next season of Anglican life together, without pretending to solve every problem or anticipate future questions. A gift of Anglicanism remains our principled "variability" (see NCP, §60ff.), as an offering of hope in the Gospel that we, with all Christians, would urgently share with the world.

- There is only **one** body of Christ, the unity of which is, at once, a *gift* of the Holy Spirit and a *call* that must be answered by each generation. Anglicans (and other Christians) are simultaneously made one in Christ by baptism and faith *and* called to a yet more complete, full, and visible communion (see NCP, §§25-29).
- Our present disputes centre on what a **holy** life looks like and at the same time present an opportunity to engage one another in as holy and godly a way as possible. By listening carefully and charitably, marking conscientious disagreements with respect, and refusing to coerce one another, we invest in the one communion we seek to cultivate, even as we find it wounded by our divisions (see NCP, §§40-48).
- We hear the summons of the Scriptures and the ancient Church to **catholic** witness, which includes the space within which inter- and intra-ecclesial dispute and discernment take place on the way to resolution. The communion of the baptised is a mixed body of pilgrims, sustained by sacramental and synodical life together, and enabled by grace to persevere to the end (see NCP, §§49-57).
- We also hear the call to **apostolic** faithfulness, which refers to the truth of the faith as given by God in Scripture and discerned by the bishops and councils of the Church. The apostolic character of Christian faith is ever renewed as it is taught and received afresh and proclaimed as the Good News of Jesus Christ for the nations — in "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8) (see NCP, §§58-71).

5. Based on these ancient marks of the Church and with continual reference to them, we have returned as a Commission to the two primary proposals of the NCPs.

*First Proposal: Revised description of the Anglican Communion*

6. After further reflection and conversation, we — with the Standing Committee of the ACC and Primates — remain confident in our first proposal of an updated description of the Anglican Communion to reflect its current structure and reality (see NCP, §73ff.).

*(i) The character of communion*

7. Full communion amongst us cannot be assumed by all Anglican churches but should be sought. The biblical, theological, sacramental, social, and missiological implications of *communion (koinonia)* must continually inspire and guide our thinking, praying, and acting as Anglican Christians and churches, even more profoundly than they have to date. This is why *full* communion in the one catholic and apostolic faith and order cannot simply be claimed, as if it has been achieved. At the same time, we are not at liberty to default to an accidental association or federation. The essential unity and catholicity of the Church, founded in baptism and common faith, must be strengthened in every way possible. The NCPs emphasise the Anglican bonds of (i) shared inheritance in faith and order, including liturgy and canon law, (ii) mutual service in mission, (iii) a commitment to taking common counsel together, and (iv) a historic connection with the See of Canterbury, both past and present. These bonds set us walking along the path of communion, however imperfectly (NCP, §76), and help us “not to neglect to meet with one another, as is the habit of some, but encourage one another, and all the more as we see the Day approaching” (Heb. 10:25).

8. To seek to uphold and propagate the Catholic and Apostolic faith and order in no way implies or intends a dilution of the Church’s urgent and perennial task of uncovering and articulating the orthodox truth of the Gospel, nor a merely subjective intention. We wish to re-present the ideals of the Anglican Communion in a realistic and hope-filled fashion. As we wrote in the Appendix of the NCPs, “the churches of the Communion *seek* to uphold and propagate one faith and order because ‘all of us’ are called to grow into ‘the unity of the faith’ (Eph. 4:13) (see §51, above).” Full communion is not easy, but it is what our Lord prayed for and prioritised on the night he was betrayed (see NCP, §17; cf. §76). We press on, therefore, even when many imagine that such unity can never be achieved, that our differences and divisions have overcome us, and that we need simply to agree to disagree. We need to find fair and flexible means of continuing to engage our differences in charity. We need to ask what it means to “make room for one another” (NCP, §§35-39). We do this in order to walk together and not apart, even when this entails walking “at a distance” (NCP, §§44-48). Such variegated walking will help us to “seek interdependently to foster the highest degree of communion possible one with another” (NCP, §76).

*(ii) Historic connection with Canterbury*

9. At the Lambeth Conference of 1930, the assembled bishops described the Anglican Communion as “a fellowship... of dioceses, provinces or regional Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury” (resolution 49). This statement followed from a view of the Anglican Communion as a gathering of churches defined by its “full communion with the

*Church of England*,” as the bishops wrote in their encyclical (NCP, §§12, 74, emphasis added). The subsequent century, however, saw significant developments in our collective understanding of what it means to be Anglican, principally in the founding of the Anglican Consultative Council in 1968 and the Primates’ Meeting in 1978. These third and fourth Instruments of Communion, now inscribed in the Constitution of the ACC (NCP, §§70, 74), work in partnership with the Archbishop of Canterbury (as first instrument, dating back to 597) and the Lambeth Conference (as second instrument, from 1867).

10. As the NCPs observe, the Church of England and Archbishop of Canterbury have never served as a “court of appeal or singular spokesperson amid conflict and disagreement”; this “would contravene the equality and mutuality” of the member churches of the Communion (NCP, §63; cf. §78). Instead, the Communion has reaffirmed, over and over, its early interest in “the historic episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church,” in the words of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1888 (NCP, §§57, 60). Growing out of its rich experience of “the common counsel of the bishops” as a non-centralised, non-coercive college of equals (LC 1930, res. 49; see NCPs, Appendix), the Lambeth Conferences of 1968 and 1978 initiated the ACC and Primates’ Meeting as complementary partners. Working together, the four Instruments would seek to articulate Anglican faith and order, founded in a broad consensus about Scripture and our common traditions as the basis for unity in mission.

11. Remembering this evolution of the Anglican Communion in the last century helps us grasp the living connection to the See of Canterbury that all Anglicans share. To describe this connection as “historic” (note: not *historical*) in no way relegates it to history. Just as the phrase *historic episcopate* refers to an ancient institution that shapes the life of the Church today, *historic connection* to Canterbury points, at once, to (i) the missionary origins of many churches of the Communion, (ii) the See of Canterbury’s place as a symbol of ancient apostolicity, and (iii) continuing relationship with the Archbishop of Canterbury as an Instrument of Communion, which is a personal and pastoral gift, albeit one that needs to be received (NCP, §§76, 78-79, 85-86). The Archbishop is therefore “invited to serve, encourage, and persuade, as a brother or sister among siblings and peers, particularly in the college of the Lambeth Conference and the Primates’ Meeting,” which “bear collegial and communal responsibilities for the faith and order of the Communion” (§§86, 78; cf. §§85, 62).

12. Since the Archbishop of Canterbury serves as “the primate of one particular church with its own polity and doctrine, which may or may not be shared fully by all other churches of the Communion,” full communion with Canterbury may not always be possible for every member church (NCP, §63; cf. §§7, §79). Again, all Anglicans should seek to strengthen the communion we share in every way possible. At the same time, IASCUFO believes that the Anglican Communion should rejoice in the fact that many of its networks are neither centred on nor organised by Canterbury or the Church of England — or any other member church (see NCP, §56, 68). These polycentric groups sustain their own initiatives and seek to enrich the Anglican Communion as well as the wider Body of Christ.

13. Notwithstanding the Communion’s connection to Canterbury, the Church of England cannot carry the faith of the Anglican family, nor should it be asked to do so. The sacred call of communion must be answered equally by all and taken with utmost seriousness. The churches of the Communion are called to seek the highest degree of communion possible, not the lowest degree that is tolerable (see NCP, §31 ff.). Here again, the Archbishop of Canterbury’s ministry of unity complements the other Instruments.

## *Second Proposal: Broadened leadership of the Instruments*

14. Regarding the second principal proposal of the NCPs, our question has remained the same. Can the Archbishop of Canterbury’s personal and pastoral ministry in the Communion be “assisted and broadened” with the help of the regional primates who form the Primates’ Standing Committee? This was the suggestion of the Primates’ Meeting in 2024, which helped to shape the second proposal as presented (NCP, §82; cf. §63).

15. To argue that “the leadership of the Communion should look like the Communion” (NCP, §85) is to raise questions of fairness, justice, contextuality, and mission, as well as questions of Anglican identity. It could mark a natural evolution to explore shared calling, convening, and representing as an outworking of equality and mutual respect (see NCP, §§63, 68, 74). In this way, the Communion as a whole, including the Church of England, might also continue to grow beyond its former colonial mindset and reckon with the polycentric character of global Christianity (see NCP, §§18-21). Here, we wish to propose two refinements to the second proposal of the NCPs.

### *(i) Collegial sharing of the first Instrument*

16. In light of helpful feedback that we have received, and after further conversation with the whole of the Standing Committee of the ACC and Archbishop Sarah, IASCUFO wishes to propose a revision of the first part our second proposal, regarding the prospect of a “rotating presidency of the ACC” (§84). Good questions (from various perspectives) have been raised about potential rivalry with the Archbishop of Canterbury, inconsistent geographical and/or theological diversity in the “face” of the president, and potentially irregular funding and staffing of the office. *A preferable approach will be simply for the Archbishop of Canterbury to invite the regional primates (who comprise the Primates’ Standing Committee) to share his or her ministry in the Communion in a collegial way and to begin to think about formalising such an arrangement in a kind of council. This might take place over a period of 3-6 years.*

17. We noted before the “increasingly collaborative” and collegial pattern of ministry among the Instruments and observed that “since at least 2016, primates have taken turns chairing sessions of the Primates’ Meeting, and the Primates’ Standing Committee has helped to shape the agendas in advance” (NCP, §83). Archbishop Justin Welby also asked the regional primates to provide pastoral support for the churches within each of their regions, when such support was requested. On his last day in office (6 Jan. 2025), Archbishop Justin wrote to the Secretary General to request that, in his absence, the regional primates take over all aspects of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s ministry in the Communion. These were significant and positive developments of the ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury, yet they were provisional and dependent upon the discernment of one archbishop.

18. We see several advantages to formalising the latter developments:

- The standing committee of the Primates’ Meeting (also called the regional primates) could continue to share the pastoral ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury as the first Instrument in service of the global family.
- Each primate on the proposed primatial council could represent the Communion (as the Archbishop of Canterbury does) in different settings, such as at the inauguration of a new province or the installation of a new primate.

- On such occasions, the relevant primate would precisely represent the Anglican Communion and not function as a delegate of the Archbishop of Canterbury. This follows from the principle of the diversified face of the Communion that ought not always be the face of the Church of England.
- The Archbishop of Canterbury could continue to serve as the presumptive representative of the Communion in most ecumenical settings, even as the option of calling upon others could prove helpful (cf. NCP, §88).
- The practical shape of this shared ministry would need to be discerned over time by the Archbishop of Canterbury and his or her colleagues, as they grow further into cooperating with one another in this way. This may also include a review of the current configuration of the five regions.

19. *Should this proposal be accepted by the Archbishop and the regional primates, we suggest that they might determine its structure, name, and remit. It would be fitting for ACC-19 to commend such a development.*

*(ii) President of the ACC*

20. ACC-19 can also make a way for the foregoing proposal by looking again at the role of President of the ACC, currently held by the Archbishop of Canterbury (see NCP, §85). As we noted before, the President of the ACC plays a largely symbolic and *ex officio* role (§84). Upon further reflection, IASCUFO believes that the role of President introduces an unnecessary level of complication in view of the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair. Within the life of the ACC today, it would be unthinkable to say, “we can’t do that because the President says so.” The Constitution of the ACC also stipulates that the President need not be “present” for the ACC to conduct its business (Article 7.1). *Having discussed this question with the Standing Committee of the ACC, we agree that the role of President is no longer helpful. As the first Instrument of Communion, we recommend that the Archbishop of Canterbury remain an ex officio member of the ACC and its Standing Committee, with both voice and vote, alongside the five other primatial members of that Standing Committee.*

21. We see several advantages to such a change:

- Eliminating the role of President will enable the ACC to simplify its structure and clarify the role of the Chair.
- Such a change fits with IASCUFO’s proposals and rationale regarding strengthened lay leadership on the Standing Committee (NCP, §94).
- The Archbishop of Canterbury already works alongside the ACC and its Standing Committee, including its five primatial members, in collegial fashion.
- The status quo hinders the work of the Anglican Communion Office (among others), which is charged with serving all churches of the Communion equally as an honest broker and servant of unity.

22. *It will be up to ACC-19 to consider whether, alongside other revisions to its Constitution, it wishes to excise the role of President. As noted in the NCPs (see §89), the views of the Archbishop of Canterbury will be critically important, not least because she will remain President of the ACC unless and until the Constitution is altered.*

## Conclusion

23. When Anglicans wake up thinking about their churches, they mostly, and rightly, focus on their local parishes and dioceses. We seek to see and serve Jesus in our communities, to hear the Gospel, and to share in healing, teaching, justice, and more, alongside our friends, families, neighbours, businesses, and nations. Some of us focus on *how* Anglicans go about doing this — through our worship, the marks of our mission, and our contribution to the wider Body of Christ. Few of us make it our daily work to reflect on the structures of our Communion or how the Instruments function. Yet these structures have the potential to enhance or inhibit how we share the communion of Jesus Christ in our churches worldwide.

24. *The Nairobi-Cairo Proposals* — now prospectively revised in view of the foregoing refinements from our meeting in Rome — attempt to envisage the Church afresh as truly one, holy, catholic, and apostolic so that Anglicans may carry the hope of a new creation into the world. The Anglican Communion remains committed to answering God’s call to unity and to finding our place in the Body of Christ. What happens between us, as we acknowledge our interdependence, matters for our integrity and effectiveness locally, regionally, and globally.

25. The proposals boil down to three urgent calls for our common life:

- Acknowledge developments in the structures of the Communion since 1930.
- Acknowledge that communion has been damaged between some churches, but that real communion remains, both as God’s gift and as something Christ calls us to intensify.
- Ensure the Communion’s leadership looks like the Communion.

26. To acknowledge the need for change and act accordingly will enhance the integrity of our witness, promote collegiality between our leaders, and amplify Anglican voices in both ecumenical and secular settings. It will also encourage all Anglican churches, even amid serious disagreements, to speak and embody a word of hope and healing.

27. If we choose not to engage the need for change and try instead to maintain the status quo, we will in effect be refusing to engage honestly and constructively with our problems and increasing the likelihood of more acrimonious division. In view of this reality, we can take heart in recalling that the Church is ever reforming. Continual testing and exploring will be needed and must be anticipated, until our Lord returns. We must, therefore, hold our structures lightly, recognising their proper provisionality in service of the healing of the one Body.

28. As Michael Ramsey memorably wrote near the end of his great book, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* (published in 1936, 25 years before he became Archbishop of Canterbury), the “credentials” of Anglicanism “are its incompleteness, with the tension and travail in its soul. It is clumsy and untidy, it baffles neatness and logic. For it is sent not to commend itself as ‘the best type of Christianity,’ but by its very brokenness to point to the universal Church wherein all have died” (see NCP, §60).

29. Looking to the months and years ahead, let us pray that the churches of the Anglican Communion can find ways to carry on together in good conscience with proper latitude, set within the framework established by the four Instruments. Pray that we can find ways to urge one another on in love, both in “the unity of the faith” and in “the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ” (Eph 4.13).