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Anglican–Oriental Orthodox International Commission

The Bethel Agreed Statement

2022

The Inheritance of Ecumenical Councils in the Church

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Introduction

Following its agreed agenda for the official dialogue, the Anglican–Oriental Orthodox International Commission (AOOIC) began its work on 'Authority in the Church' in Dublin, Ireland, in 2017, and continued it in its 2018 meeting, at Atchaneh, Lebanon. The papers presented included the following topics: primacy, the inheritance of Ecumenical Councils, the interpretation of Chalcedon and anathemas, synods, and bishops. At its 2019 meeting in Cairo, Egypt, the Commission completed a preliminary statement on the inheritance of Ecumenical Councils. In 2020 and 2021, it was not possible to meet in person because of the Covid-19 global pandemic. The Commission finalized its work on this topic at its 2022 meeting in Braintree, England. The current work is intended to be a continuation of the Agreed Statements *Christology* (2014) and *The Procession and Work of the Holy Spirit* (2017), and a prelude to a future Agreed Statement on synods and bishops, within the broader context of a consideration of authority in the Church.

Anglicans and Oriental Orthodox acknowledge the authoritative place of the Ecumenical Councils in the life of the Church. Historically, however, they have been divided over the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD, received as an Ecumenical Council in Anglicanism but rejected by Oriental Orthodox. The current Agreed Statement seeks to define the place of Ecumenical Councils in the life of the Church, as one element contributing to agreement on authority, by looking briefly at the Ecumenical Councils that both families accept, and then considering what level of agreement can be discerned on the status of Chalcedon.

Our experience indicates that through dialogue that includes prayer, study and fellowship, Anglicans and Oriental Orthodox are able to overcome historic divisions, and have been brought closer. We offer this Agreed Statement as a contribution to the significant ecumenical work and agreements which have taken place over recent decades.

I The Conciliar Nature of the Church

1. Before His[1] passion, Our Lord Jesus Christ promised to the Apostles the gift of the Holy Spirit, who would lead the Church into all truth,[2] thereby affirming the guiding of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church through time. Christ also promised to Simon Peter that His Church, founded on the rock, would never fail.[3]
2. From the very beginning, Christ had warned that there would be those who could, from malice or through lack of understanding, distort or misrepresent the Gospel.[4] Part of the Church's task is therefore to discern truth and exclude error. These two tasks are complementary, and in order to define clearly the truth that is being upheld, there must sometimes be a clear statement of the falsehood that is being rejected. From the earliest days of the Church, it appears that the Apostles gathered in council to address questions which were in danger of distorting the truth and dividing the body of the faithful.[5]
3. From these beginnings, the bishops of the Church in the post-apostolic period chose to gather in local and regional synods to discuss the well-being of the Church and to articulate the mind of the Church with respect to matters of dispute in order or in doctrine.
4. The councils of the Church, especially when faced with novel ideas and serious disciplinary disorders, tended to see danger in an independent opinion. The very word *haeresis* (heresy) implied individual choice or selection,[6] rather than a willingness to believe and live in consonance with the tradition of the Apostles as it was received by the Churches, which had been founded by the Apostles and their disciples. By asserting the conciliar nature of the Church from its earliest period, the Church formulated a view that no single theologian or teacher could claim a correct understanding of the Christian faith apart from the gathered Church.
5. As the Christian faith expanded and the Church grew, so too the pattern of episcopal leadership by which it was governed became universal, and bishops were understood to succeed to the apostolic office and bear the responsibility to guard the faith.[7] There was an understanding that the bishops gathered in a council shared equally in apostolic ministry. It became the practice of the Church therefore when there was a dispute to call together councils of bishops, who would seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to divide truth from error.
6. Hence, to deal with contentious issues, the Church held different types of councils: diocesan, provincial, patriarchal and others. After legal status for Christianity was granted by the Roman Emperor Constantine (306–37 AD), the availability of imperial resources and the new-found tolerance afforded to the Church[8] permitted a new level

[1] We style words referring to God with initial capital letters.
[2] John 16.13.
[3] Matthew 16.18.
[4] Cf. Matthew 7.15; 24.11.
[5] Cf. Acts 15.
[6] *Haeresis* derives from the Greek word for 'individual choice'.
[7] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 4:33:8.
[8] e.g. the Edict of Milan in 313 AD.

of conciliar expression, the 'ecumenical' council, at which all the bishops of the Church or their representatives could be present.

7. It became part of the expected work of ecumenical councils of the Church to unite the Church by proclaiming truth and denouncing error, in order to protect a correct – an orthodox – understanding of the Christian faith. There are therefore two sides to the proclamations of a council: the declaration of the truth by means of statements or formulas of faith, creeds and canons, and the refutation of heresies by its anathemas.

8. However, none of the councils happened in a vacuum, and political circumstances and the influence of certain emperors or prominent figures could sway proceedings, even to the extent that it was possible for a council to proclaim a mistaken understanding of the Christian faith 'once for all delivered to the saints'.[9]

9. Confident in the unfailing guidance of the Holy Spirit, however, the Church came to recognize and receive certain councils as having a pre-eminent authority in its life, and as defining the authentic proclamation of the truth. The distinctive title of an 'Ecumenical Council' came to be reserved for such councils, as they were not only seen to have gathered a representative body of all the bishops of the Church but also, on the basis of multiple criteria, recognized and received by the whole Church and therefore truly 'ecumenical'.

[9] Jude 1.3. For example, the Council of Sirmium in 359 AD (see §20 below).

II Defining the Ecumenical Councils

10. There have been times in the life of the Church when the context necessitated these Ecumenical Councils. They represent an expression of the highest authority in the Church, and are pre-eminent over any local synod, patriarch or bishop.

11. To be acknowledged as *Ecumenical*, a council should:

    a) have broad participation by the Churches of the *oikoumene*,

    b) define crucial faith issues in agreement with the Holy Scriptures and the apostolic faith,

    c) be received by the whole Church and

    d) hold a binding character in its decisions on the whole of the Church as correctly teaching and defending the truth of the divine revelation in Christ.

12. The Oriental Orthodox Churches accept three Ecumenical Councils only: Nicaea (325 AD), Constantinople (381 AD) and Ephesus (431 AD). They do not recognize any council held after Ephesus as Ecumenical.

13. The Anglican Communion has not expressly, or officially, defined, in its historic formularies or Canons, an exact number of those councils which it receives as Ecumenical, although there is a broad consensus in favour of the first four councils, and a respect for six and sometimes even seven:[10] Nicaea I (325 AD), Constantinople I (381 AD), Ephesus (431 AD), Chalcedon (451 AD), Constantinople II (553 AD), Constantinople III (680–1 AD) and Nicaea II (787 AD).

    Article XXI of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of 1662, formulated in the context of the Reformation, which rearticulated the authority of Scripture and repudiated papal power, adopted a cautious tone:

    > General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together, (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God,) they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture.

14. Since our aim is the unity of faith in substance, rather than in expression, we acknowledge that specifying an exact number of Ecumenical Councils is secondary and should not be considered a precondition or a prerequisite in our common search for that unity.

15. We agree also that the first three Ecumenical Councils have, because of their more general acceptance in the Churches of East and West, a greater degree of inclusiveness, which the later Councils do not have.

[10] e.g. the 1559 Elizabethan Act of Supremacy references the authority of the first four councils, and this is replicated in theological works of the period and later. However, the view is not uniform, and Anglican formularies often refer to the authority of councils without specifying a particular number and sometimes reference councils beyond the first four.

III The First Three Ecumenical Councils

A Nicaea (325 AD)

16. Foremost among the Ecumenical Councils is the Council of Nicaea (325 AD), which adopted its definitive creed, affirming the true nature of the person of Christ, and by which the false teaching concerning the nature of Christ taught by the Alexandrian presbyter Arius was anathematized, or declared forbidden.

17. This Council was convened by the Roman Emperor Constantine, the first Christian emperor, venerated for his defence of the orthodox faith in Nicaea. The Creed of Nicaea has been received by the universal Church as defending a correct understanding of the person of Jesus Christ. This was the first council of the Church to adopt the theological formula defining who Christ is:

> and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father as only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, *homoousios* with the Father.[11]

18. This was the great positive Christological definition of the Council. The bishops also chose to anathematize those statements which were believed to be erroneous in order to clarify the truth. At Nicaea, the main subject of the anathema was Arius and those who espoused his views:

> And those who say 'there was once when he was not' or 'he was not before he was begotten' or 'he came into existence from nothing' or who affirm that the Son of God is of another hypostasis or substance, or a creature, or mutable or subject to change, such ones the catholic and apostolic church pronounces accursed and separated from the church.[12]

19. In the Council of Nicaea therefore both our traditions see the bishops of the Church acting together to defend the true reception of the revelation of God in Christ: proclaiming the truth and defining error.

20. Nevertheless, as clear and virtually unanimous as the decision of the Council has subsequently been received to be, at the time it did not end controversy within the Church, and its reception and recognition as ecumenical and binding on the faithful by the churches was not a simple or straightforward process. Rather, it was subject again to the vicissitudes and policies of the Roman emperors. The successor of Constantine, the Emperor Constantius II (337–61 AD), was inclined towards a favourable view of the teachings of Arius. He convened a council by his own authority at Sirmium in 359 AD, which supported and proclaimed a view of Christ which departed from the teaching of Nicaea, and 'The whole world groaned, and

[11] William G Rusch, 'The Creed of the Synod of Nicaea', in *The Trinitarian Controversy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 49.
[12] Ibid.

was astonished to find itself Arian.'[13] However, the universal Church did not accept the formulated anti-Nicaean Sirmium creed.

[13] *Jerome, Dialogue against the Luciferians*, §19, in *St Jerome Letters and Select Works*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, 6 (Sage Software), 698.

B Constantinople (381 AD)

21. In response to the Council of Sirmium, the Council of Constantinople was convened by the Emperor Theodosius I (379–95 AD), who worked to see the establishment of Christianity as the only official faith of the Empire. The Council of Constantinople declared:

> We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets.[14]

22. It is part of Christian faith to see the Holy Spirit in some sense at work to ensure that truth is brought out of falsehood. Christians do not accept a narrative of the councils held in the early Church which describes them only as the fruit of human argument and political manoeuvring. Thus, faith can assert that it was not merely by human intention that the faith was again subsequently defined and upheld by the Council of Constantinople, when it affirmed the teachings of Nicaea and set forth definitively the correct and orthodox understanding of the true nature of Christ.

23. It is part of the human condition that the whole truth concerning the godhead is beyond human knowledge, save in the revelation of God in Christ. Even the Council of Constantinople did not result in the final settlement of questions concerning the nature of Christ. In particular, political tensions between the patriarchal sees, exacerbated by the policies and favouritisms of the emperors in East and West, led to further argument and counter-argument about the truths established in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.

[14] *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, 14 (Sage Software), 441, www.academia.edu/35806797/THE_SAGE_DIGITAL_LIBRARY_COLLECTIONS_THE_NICENE_AND_POST_NICENE_FATHERS_SECOND_SERIES_VOLUME_14 (accessed on 27 October 2022).

C Ephesus (431 AD)

24. In 431 AD, the Council of Ephesus was convened by the Roman Emperor Theodosius II (408–50 AD) in an effort to attain consensus in the church, which was again threatened by divisions on Christology. The Council confirmed the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, and condemned the teachings of Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who divided into two the person of Christ and held that only the humanity of Christ (rather than the Incarnate Word) was born of the Virgin Mary, who, therefore, would be called *Christotokos*, 'Christ-bearer', but not *Theotokos*, 'God-bearer'. The Council of Ephesus gained recognition as ecumenical only when its faith was later accepted by the Church of Antioch in 433 through the Formula of Reunion.[15]

25. In its seventh canon, the Council of Ephesus prohibited making, holding, or teaching any other faith than that of Nicaea. The Council forbade anyone, even a subsequent General Council, to add to or alter the faith of the Creed:

> When these things had been read, the holy Synod decreed that it is unlawful for any man to bring forward, or to write, or to compose a different Faith (πίστιν ἑτέραν) as a rival to that established by the holy Fathers assembled with the Holy Ghost in Nicaea.[16]

26. The recitation of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed at the Eucharist began at Antioch under Peter the Fuller in 471. This practice was later adopted at Constantinople by Patriarch Timotheus in 511, reaffirming the normative status of the Creed of 381 for all Christians.

27. **We agree that the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed came into being under the operation and leading of the Holy Spirit. For the Oriental Orthodox it is the definitive expression of Orthodoxy. 'It is unlawful for any man to bring forward, or to write, or to compose a different Faith as a rival to that established by the holy Fathers assembled with the Holy Ghost in Nicaea.'[17] The bishops of the Lambeth Conference in 1888 described 'the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of Christian faith'.[18] We accept the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed as the true interpretation of the revelation of Jesus Christ found in Scripture and upheld by the Tradition of the Church.**

[15] The Formula of Reunion (433) brought unity between John of Antioch and Cyril of Alexandria.
[16] *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, 579.
[17] Ibid.
[18] From the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral. For a discussion of the addition of the *filioque* clause and our existing Agreed Statement on this subject, please see *The Procession and Work of the Holy Spirit* (2017).

IV Chalcedon (451 AD)

28. The Council of Chalcedon represents the most significant point of rupture between the Churches within the Roman Empire and those on the edge of or outside Roman political authority. It is therefore especially important to understand the political and religious background as we seek to find an agreed statement on the theology presented and promulgated by the Council.

A Complicating Factors

29. In 451, Emperor Marcian (450–7 AD) convoked a council at the imperial palace of Chalcedon. The immediate religious cause of this council was the continuing dispute in the Church concerning the exact nature of the union of the divine and human in Christ. Since the previous councils, there was a danger that the fact that Christ was understood as both God and Human could lead to an overemphasis on one or the other. Two particular errors impacted on the life of the Church, each representing an extreme imbalance in the understanding of the nature of Christ as God and Human: the errors that Christ was a divinely adopted human, as taught by Nestorianism, and that the divine and human natures were confused in Christ so that He ceased to be truly both, as taught by Eutychianism.

30. The bishops were gathered at the Council to engage upon the task of seeking to defend Christ as fully God and fully human. However, it is possible to detect, both before the Council and in its deliberations, philosophical and linguistic differences, human rivalries and political circumstances which complicated and obscured that task.

B The Tome of Leo

31. In particular, difficulties arose from certain passages in the Tome of Leo.[19] The Council declared the Tome to be 'a common pillar against misbelievers'. The Tome reads:

> For each form performs what is proper to it in communion with the other, the Word achieving what is the Word's, while the body accomplishes what is the body's; the one shines with miracles, while the other has succumbed to outrages… If therefore he [Eutyches] accepts the faith of Christians and does not avert his hearing from the preaching of the gospel, let him consider which nature it was that, pierced by the nails, hung on the wood of the cross.[20]

These statements of Leo were rejected by the Fathers of the Oriental Orthodox family because they were taken to mean that each nature performed separately what is its own, and that, in their operation, they expressed harmony rather than the natural and hypostatic union. In that case, operation of the natures could only be prior to the union, which is unacceptable.

[19] This is the title commonly given to a letter from Pope Leo I delivered to Patriarch Flavian of Constantinople in 449 that discusses a number of doctrinal matters.

[20] R.M Price and Michael Gaddis, The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Volume 2, (Liverpool University Press, 2005), 19, 20.

32. **We agree that distributing the acts of Christ to the divine and human natures means no more than a distinction in thought alone (τῃ θεωριᾳ μόνῃ). In reality, every action of Christ subsequent to the hypostatic and natural union proceeds from the union, and is operated by the one person of the Word of God incarnate.**[21]

[21] Cf. Agreed Statement on Christology (2014), §§3 and 8.

C The Definition of Faith

33. The majority of the bishops gathering at Chalcedon adopted a formula defining the Saviour as:

> one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, acknowledged in two natures without confusion, change, division, or separation (the difference of the natures being in no way destroyed by the union, but rather the distinctive character of each nature being preserved and coming together into one person and one hypostasis), not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, Only-begotten, God, Word, Lord, Jesus Christ, even as the prophets from of old and Jesus Christ himself taught us about him and the symbol of the fathers has handed down to us.[22]

34. The Oriental Orthodox position is that this definition of the Council of Chalcedon did not secure nor underline a fully orthodox understanding of the person of Christ. The Council did not adopt the use of certain phrases such as 'the hypostatic union' and 'natural union', which had been central to the teaching of St Cyril, nor did it adopt his helpful principle that there can be no distinction between the two natures except in thought alone.[23]

35. **We agree that the Chalcedonian formula 'in two natures' (ἐν δύο φύσεσιν), historically rejected by the non-Chalcedonians who traditionally used the formula 'of two natures' (ἐκ δύο φύσεων), can be recognized by the Oriental Orthodox Churches as a legitimate expression of the faith for Anglicans, as far as it means the distinction of the natures after the union in thought alone, in accordance with the seventh anathema of the Council of Constantinople II (553 AD)[24] and §§2 and 4 of our Agreed Statement on Christology.[25]**

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[22] R.M Price and Michael Gaddis, The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Volume 2, (Liverpool University Press, 2005), 204.

[23] Cf. Cyril of Alexandria, Letter 40 to Acacius, Patrologia Graeca, 77, columns 192–3; Letter 45, first to Succensus, Patrologia Graeca, 77, columns. 232–3; Letter 46, second to Succensus, Patrologia Graeca, 77, column 245.

[24] 'If anyone using the expression, "in two natures," does not confess that our one Lord Jesus Christ has been revealed in the divinity and in the humanity, so as to designate by that expression a difference of the natures of which an ineffable union is unconfusedly made, [a union] in which neither the nature of the Word was changed into that of the flesh, nor that of the flesh into that of the Word, for each remained that it was by nature, the union being hypostatic; but shall take the expression with regard to the mystery of Christ in a sense so as to divide the parties, or recognizing the two natures in the only Lord Jesus, God the Word made man, does not content himself with taking in a theoretical manner the difference of the natures which compose him, which difference is not destroyed by the union between them, for one is composed of the two and the two are in one, but shall make use of the number [two] to divide the natures or to make of them Persons properly so called: let him be anathema.' *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, 753–4.

[25] Agreed Statement on Christology.

D Anathemas and Condemnations

36. There were sixteen sessions of the Council, with Dioscorus the Patriarch of Alexandria being deposed as early as the third session for disciplinary reasons and not for matters of faith. The anathemas of the Council of Chalcedon exacerbated the possibility of misunderstandings. On the Tome of Leo, the Definition of Faith of the Council stated:

> it anathematizes those who invent two natures of the Lord before the union and imagine one nature after the union.[26]

37. We agree that the anathema occurring in the Definition of Faith was intended to address the false teaching of Eutyches, but contextually it could also be understood otherwise, as attacking the teaching of St Cyril on the perfect hypostatic and natural union of God and man, and his formula of the 'One Incarnate Nature of the Word of God'. With the deposition of Dioscorus, a strong proponent of Cyril's teaching, the decisions of the Council could be understood as an attack on the very Christology it was intended to defend.

38. Lifting the anathemas and condemnations of the past against Councils and Fathers accepted by either of our traditions will assist in the progress of ecumenical convergence between Anglicans and Oriental Orthodox. These anathemas should be lifted according to the traditions of the families of the Churches.

[26] R.M Price and Michael Gaddis, The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Volume 2, (Liverpool University Press, 2005), 204.

E The Ecumenical Character of Chalcedon

39. The Council of Chalcedon is undoubtedly a turning point in the history of the universal Church and has impacted the shape of world history. The divisions in the body of Christ that began with the Council and continue to this day have resulted in major ecclesiastical, religious and political consequences. The fate of Christianity in the East in the following centuries was largely determined by the outcomes of this council which fractured the Church.

40. For the Churches of the Anglican Communion, the ecumenical character of the Council of Chalcedon has been accepted as correctly defining the nature of God's revelation in Christ, and therefore a part of the inherited deposit of the faith.

41. For the Churches of the Oriental Orthodox family, Chalcedon is not accepted as an Ecumenical Council as they consider that, among other issues, its definition of faith deviates from the Cyrillian formula of 'One Incarnate Nature of the Word of God'.

42. We do not deny the sorrowful historical facts linked to Chalcedon and its aftermath. Yet the fruit of modern Christological dialogue and scholarship enables us to re-evaluate the Council and look at it afresh.

43. **On the path to reconciliation, unity and shared mission between the two traditions we agree that:**

    a) The Oriental Orthodox can regard the Chalcedonian definition of faith as a legitimate expression of the faith for Anglicans. It may be considered consonant in substance with the faith of the Oriental Orthodox, as long as it is interpreted in accordance with this Agreed Statement and the Agreed Statement on Christology (2014).

    b) In light of this Agreement Statement and the Agreed Statement on Christology (2014), Anglicans can commit to putting the Council of Chalcedon in its appropriate historical context. Anglicans need not understand the Oriental Orthodox Churches' rejection of Chalcedon as an Ecumenical Council to be an obstacle to the search for communion between the two traditions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

44. We acknowledge the inadequacy of human thought, concepts and language in expressing the fullness of the divine mystery of the Incarnation. A complete comprehension of the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ is beyond human knowledge.[27]

45. With this sense of mystery we have revisited our understanding of the nature of Christ. We have been able to articulate this together in common proclamations on Christology and on the Ecumenical Councils in spite of our historical division with respect to the Council of Chalcedon.

46. We wish to propose to our churches that the faith declared in the Creed, as formulated at the Councils of Nicaea (325 AD) and Constantinople (381 AD), should be a sufficient declaration of the truth of the nature of Christ to enable reconciliation, unity and shared mission.

> We believe … in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father.[28]

47. We do not call on each other to renounce the Christological declarations received by our traditions, which are seen as upholding the faith of the creed received by both our traditions as the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.

48. We recognize that human passions and weaknesses have exacerbated misunderstandings and differences in language about the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. We implore divine forgiveness for everything that has been said and done over the centuries that is contrary to Christian love and humility. At the same time we give thanks to the Triune God that our present dialogue has been graced by the hope and joy of a shared witness to the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We submit this agreed statement of the Commission to the responsible authorities of the Oriental Orthodox Family of Churches and the Anglican Communion for their consideration and action.

Signed at The Bethel Centre, in Braintree, England, October 2022

[27] Cf. our Agreed Statement on Christology, §4.
[28] Rusch, 'The Creed of the Synod of Nicaea', 49.

The Rt Revd Gregory K Cameron

His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos of London

Present at the meetings in Egypt (2019) and in England (2022)

Anglican Communion

The Rt Revd Gregory K Cameron, The Church in Wales (Co-Chair)
The Rt Revd Anthony Ball, The Episcopal/Anglican Province of Alexandria (2022)
The Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, The Church of Ireland
The Rt Revd Dr Samy Shehata, The Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East (2019)
The Ven Dr Edward Simonton OGS, The Church of Canada (2019, online in 2022)
The Revd Stephen Stavrou, The Church of England
The Revd Canon Dr William Taylor, The Church of England
The Revd Dr Gabrielle Thomas (2022), The Church of England
The Revd Dr Will Adam, Anglican Communion Office (Co-Secretary 2019)
The Revd Neil Vigers, Anglican Communion Office (Co-Secretary)

Oriental Orthodox Family of Churches

Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria
His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos of London, United Kingdom (Co-Chair)
The Revd Fr Dr Pishoy Wasfy, Diocese of Mississauga, Vancouver and Western Canada

Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch
His Eminence Archbishop Polycarpus Augin Aydin, The Netherlands
His Eminence Archbishop Severios Roger Akhrass, Lebanon (Co-Secretary)

Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church – Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin – Armenia
His Grace Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, Great Britain and Ireland (2022)

Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church – Holy See of Cilicia, Antelias – Lebanon
The Very Revd Fr Hrant Tahanian, Lebanon
The Revd Fr Zareh Sarkissian (2019)

Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
The Revd Fr Abate Gobena (2022)

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
His Eminence Metropolitan Geevarghese Mor Coorilos, India (2019)
The Revd Fr Dr K M George, India
The Revd Fr Nithin Prasad Koshy (2022)