

International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue
Communiqué
Malta, 14–21 October 2017



In the name of the Triune God, and with the blessing and guidance of our Churches, the International Commission for Anglican–Orthodox Theological Dialogue met in Sliema, Republic of Malta from 14 to 21 October 2017. The Commission is deeply grateful for the comprehensive and warm hospitality offered by the Anglican Communion. As always the work of the Commission was undergirded by daily prayer and worship. The Commission attended the Sunday Parish Eucharist at the Anglican Pro-Cathedral of St Paul and a celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the Greek Orthodox Parish Church of St George in Valletta.

The Commission welcomed its new Orthodox Co-Chair Metropolitan Athenagoras of Belgium and the new representative of the Patriarchate of Antioch, as well as the new representatives of the Anglican Communion. The Commission honoured the Pauline links with Malta through visits to holy sites, such as St Paul's Grotto in Rabat, connected with the presence of the Apostle on the island following his shipwreck on his voyage to Rome (Acts 27.28).

The members of the Commission were met with kindness by their Maltese fellow Christians, according to traditional local hospitality (Acts 28.2). Wider ecumenical links were celebrated through visits to the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St Paul at Mdina and Co-Cathedral of St John at Valletta. Monsignor Charles Scicluna Jude, Archbishop of Malta, generously received the

Commission for dinner at his official residence for a dinner. On its last day the Commission attended a reception at the home of Marina, Lady Marks.

As agreed at its last meeting in Armagh the Commission continued to develop its work on the theological understanding of the human person, according to principles in its agreed statement *In the Image and Likeness of God: A Hope-Filled Anthropology* (Buffalo 2015) by focusing this year on the practical implications of the Buffalo Agreed Statement, especially in regard to the complex and pressing issues surrounding environment and ecology as well as the ending of human life.

Members of the Commission discussed four primary papers that addressed these considerations, as well as prepared written responses to those papers made by Anglican and Orthodox members. These were discussed in plenary sessions where further critical reflections ensued in a constructive manner. Two representative members of the Commission were assigned the task of collating the different points of view on the two themes arising from the presentations, responses and discussions that followed. These will be drawn together as a first draft of joint statement to be agreed in the future. The Commission concluded its work by observing that a significant level of theological convergence had been attained in its discussions.

The papers presented were:

1. *Ecology: An Orthodox Approach* by the Very Revd Dr Valentin Vassechko
Anglican Response : The Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut
Orthodox Response : Metropolitan Seraphim of Zimbabwe
2. “*And it was good*”: *The Love of God and the Fragility of Creation* by Bishop Humberto Maiztegui Gonçalves
Anglican Response : Bishop Graham Usher
Orthodox Response : Prof. Dr. Miltiadis Konstantinou
3. *Anglican Approaches to Death and Dying* by the Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke and the Revd Canon Dr Sarah Rowland Jones
Anglican Response : The Revd Canon Dr Alison Joyce
Orthodox Response : The Revd. Fr. Jonathan A. Hemmings
4. *Euthanasia and the Orthodox Approach* by the Revd Dr George Dragas
Anglican Response : The Revd Canon Philip Hobson OGS
Orthodox Response : Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Kition

In the context of environmental issues and the ecological crisis facing our common home the Commission extended its gratitude to both the Orthodox Church and the Anglican Communion for

their commitment in recent years through their leaders and synods to offering substantial leadership to the movement for environmental justice and sustainability.

The work of the Commission will continue at its next meeting in October 2018, hosted by the Orthodox Church in Cyprus.

The Most Revd Richard Clark of Armagh
Anglican Co-Chairman

Metropolitan Athenagoras of Belgium
Orthodox Co-Chairman

Representatives of the Orthodox Church

Metropolitan Serafim of Zimbabwe
Patriarchate of Alexandria

The Revd Fr Jonathan A. Hemmings
Patriarchate of Antioch

The Revd Dr George Dragas
Patriarchate of Jerusalem

The Revd Dr Valentin Vassechko
Patriarchate of Moscow

Professor Dr Bogdan Lubardic
Patriarchate of Serbia

Metropolitan Nifon of Târgoviște
Patriarchate of Romania

Protopresbyter Giorgi Zviadadze
Patriarchate of Georgia

Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Kition
Church of Cyprus

Professor Dr Miltiadis Konstantinou
Church of Greece

Bishop Ilia of Philomelion
Church of Albania

The Revd Dr Christos B Christakis
Co-Secretary

Members unable to attend:

The Revd Fr Andrzej Minko
Church of Poland

Representatives of the Anglican Communion

The Most Revd Philip Aspinall
The Anglican Church of Australia

The Rt Revd Humberto Gonçalves
The Episcopal Church of Brazil

The Rt Revd Graham Usher
The Church of England

The Revd Canon Dr Alison Joyce
The Church of England

The Revd Canon Sarah Rowland Jones
The Church of Wales

The Revd Canon Philip Hobson OGS
The Anglican Church of Canada

The Revd Gcebile Phumzile Gina
The Anglican Church of Southern Africa

The Rt Revd Michael Lewis of Cyprus & the Gulf
The Episcopal Church in Jerusalem & the Middle East

The Very Revd Canon Hosam Naoum
The Episcopal Church in Jerusalem & the Middle East

The Revd Marc Billimoria
Church of Ceylon

The Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut
Co-Secretary

The Revd Neil Vigers
Anglican Communion Office

Members Unable to Attend:

The Rt Revd Dr Rowan Williams *Representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury*