

Anglican Oriental Orthodox International Commission

Communiqué

The meeting of the Anglican Oriental Orthodox International Commission, which was to have taken place at Walsingham from Tuesday, 28 October to Sunday, 2 November 2003, has been postponed at the suggestion of the Heads of the Coptic Orthodox Church (His Holiness Pope Shenouda III), the Syrian Orthodox Church (His Holiness Patriarch Zakka I) and the Armenian Orthodox Church, Catholicosate of Cilicia (His Holiness Catholicos Aram I), who met in Antelias, Lebanon, on 17 and 18 October, 2003.

The present time is clearly a moment of uncertainty in the life of the Anglican Communion, with the consecration of a homosexual person in a committed, same-sex relationship as a Bishop within the Episcopal Church (USA). The developments facing the Communion were addressed in the Statement of the Primates of the Anglican Communion who met together with the Moderators of the United Churches at Lambeth Palace, London, on 15 and 16 October, to consider their reactions and the way forward for the Communion. In the light of that meeting, the Archbishop of Canterbury has set up a Commission which will look at the future structures of the Communion in the light of decisions taken in the Episcopal Church (USA) and in the Anglican Church of Canada.

It was felt by the Heads of the Oriental Churches who met in Antelias, that the on-going dialogue between the Anglicans and the family of Oriental Churches would be better served by waiting, at present, for the Anglican Communion to have time to take proper account of, and reflect upon, the consecration which has taken place. It is very much hoped by all participants that the work of the Commission will be resumed at a time convenient to all.

The Commission, which has been in existence since 2002 and which built on a long-standing history of dialogue and co-operation, has already produced an Agreed Statement on Christology. The Statement is currently being considered by the member churches of the Anglican Communion and the family of Oriental Orthodox Churches. The Commission plans to undertake work on the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit in its next round of talks, and asks for prayers for the future of Anglican-Oriental Orthodox dialogue at this present time.

The members of the Commission are:

Oriental Orthodox

His Eminence Metropolitan Bishoy (Co-Chairman), Coptic Orthodox Church
His Grace Bishop Nareg Alemezian (Co-Secretary), Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia
His Grace Bishop Angaelos, Coptic Orthodox Church
His Eminence Metropolitan Mor Eustathius Matta Roham, Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch
His Grace Bishop Yeznik Petrossian, Armenian Catholicosate of All Armenians

His Grace Bishop Mikael Ajapahyan, Armenian Catholicosate of All Armenians
His Grace Bishop Kegham Khatcherian, Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia
His Grace Bishop Geevarghese Mar Coorilos, Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church
The Revd Dr K M George, Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church
His Eminence Metropolitan Mor Gregorios Youhanna Ibrahim, Syrian Orthodox Church
The Revd Seife-Sellassie Yohannes, Ethiopian Orthodox Church
The Revd Kaleab Ghebresslassie, Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church

Anglicans

The Rt Revd Dr Geoffrey Rowell (Co-Chairman), Church of England
The Revd Canon Gregory K Cameron (Co-Secretary), Director of Ecumenical Affairs and Studies, Anglican Communion Office
The Most Revd George Clive Handford, Anglican Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East
The Rt Revd Duleep de Chickera, Bishop of Colombo, Sri Lanka
The Rt Revd Michael Jackson, Bishop of Clogher, Church of Ireland
The Revd Canon Harold J. Nahabedian, Anglican Church of Canada
The Revd William Taylor, Church of England
The Revd Canon Jonathan Gough, Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative
The Rt Revd John Craig Stewart, Anglican Church in Australia
The Revd Canon Professor J. Robert Wright, Episcopal Church, USA

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