

Communiqué from the meeting of ARCIC III in Rio de Janeiro 2013

The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, the official body appointed by the two Communion to engage in theological dialogue, has held the third meeting of its new phase (ARCIC III), at the Mosteiro de Sao Bento, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, (29 April – 7 May 2013). This is the first time in its forty year history that ARCIC has met in Latin America, and, indeed, in the southern hemisphere.

Members of the Commission are grateful to Dom Filipe da Silva OSB, the Abbot, to his community for their gracious hospitality, and to the Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro. The Commission participated in daily Vespers and in the Sunday Eucharist at the monastery church, and were held in prayer throughout by the monastic community.

A wide range of papers was prepared for the meeting and discussed, taking the Commission further towards its goal of producing an agreed statement. The mandate for this third phase of ARCIC is to explore: the Church as Communion, local and universal, and how in communion the local and universal Church come to discern right ethical teaching. In exploring this mandate, the members of the Commission engaged in theological analysis and shared reflection on the nature of the Church and those structures which contribute to discernment and decision-making. A day was spent considering some case studies of ethical issues which members had prepared, and analysing the ways in which the two Communion have come to their present teaching on these matters.

Over the forty years of its work, ARCIC has produced a number of Agreed Statements. The work of ARCIC I received official responses from the two Communion. The Commission continued its task of preparing the documents of ARCIC II for presentation to the respective Communion to assist with their reception. Members reviewed responses already given to each of the five agreed statements and will prepare introductions for them that place each of these documents within the current ecumenical situation.

The Commission welcomed at a meal leaders of the local Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, including Anglican Bishop Filadelfo Oliveira and Roman Catholic Bishop Francisco Biasin, and members of the local Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Brazil. ARCIC is keen to deepen its relationship with such local and regional ARCs and rejoices both Communion are exploring concrete ways of sharing documents and discussion about ARCIC's work.

Members of the Commission spent most of a day in the City of God, one of the many favelas (neighbourhoods housing large numbers of the poor and displaced) that surround Rio de Janeiro. They were warmly welcomed by the Roman Catholic parish and their priest Fr Marcio Jose'. Fr Nicholas Wheeler, the Anglican parish priest, arranged for the Commission to visit three projects in the community (a day centre for seniors, a community development centre, and a mural project that portrays the community's history and provides a vision of the City of God from Revelation), and to learn from the local police how officers engage positively with the community. The evening concluded with ecumenical vespers. As one member of the Commission wrote in

reflection, 'In offering thanks, one of our bishops said he was trying to think of a word to sum up our visit, and could only think of 'hope'. Hope sprang from real ecumenical activity (unashamedly from a Christian base but working to support any community good), and the sheer hard work and organising by local people.'

The Commission will prepare further papers, expand the case studies, and continue its work in preparation for its next meeting 12-20 May 2014.

APPENDIX

MEMBERS OF ARCIC III present at the meeting

Co-Chairs

- The Most Revd Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham, England
- The Rt Revd Christopher Hill, Bishop of Guildford, Acting Co-Chair

Roman Catholics

- The Revd Robert Christian OP, Angelicum University, Rome
- The Revd Adelbert Denaux, Dean, Tilburg School of Catholic Theology, Utrecht, The Netherlands
- The Most Revd Arthur Kennedy, auxiliary bishop, Archdiocese of Boston, Massachusetts, USA
- Professor Paul D. Murray, Durham University, England
- Revd Sister Teresa Okure SHCJ, Catholic Institute of West Africa, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
- Professor Janet E. Smith, Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit, Michigan, USA
- The Revd Professor Vimal Tirimanna CSsR, Alphonsianum University, Rome
- The Very Revd Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB, Ampleforth Abbey, England

Anglicans

- Canon Dr Paula Gooder, Birmingham, England / The Church of England
- The Rt Revd Christopher Hill, Bishop of Guildford, England / The Church of England
- The Rt Revd Nkosinathi Ndwandwe, Bishop Suffragan of Natal, Southern Area, Southern Africa
- The Rt Revd Linda Nicholls, Area Bishop for Trent-Durham, Diocese of Toronto, Canada
- The Revd Canon Michael Nai-Chiu Poon, Trinity Theological College, Singapore / Province of South East Asia
- The Revd Peter Sedgwick, St Michael's College, Llandaff, Wales / Church in Wales
- The Revd Dr Charles Sherlock, Anglican Diocese of Bendigo, Australia
- The Revd Canon Jonathan Goodall, Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative

Consultants

The Revd Odair Pedroso Mateus, Faith and Order Secretariat, World Council of Churches

The work of the Commission is supported by the Co-Secretaries, Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan (Anglican Communion Office), Monsignor Mark Langham (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity) and Mr Neil Vigers (Administrative Assistant, Anglican Communion Office).