

Communique from the Meeting of ARCIC III at Bose

The Anglican - Roman Catholic International Commission has completed the first meeting of its new phase (ARCIC III) at the Monastery of Bose in northern Italy (May 17-27, 2011). The Commission, chaired by the Most Reverend David Moxon (Anglican Archbishop of the New Zealand Dioceses) and the Most Reverend Bernard Longley (Roman Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham) comprises eighteen theologians from a wide range of backgrounds across the world^[1]. In response to the Programme set forth by Pope Benedict and Archbishop Rowan Williams in their 2006 Common Declaration, discussions have focussed on the interrelated issues: the Church as Communion, local and universal, and how in communion the local and universal Church come to discern right ethical teaching. The Programme also required the Commission to re-examine how the “commitment to the common goal of the restoration of complete communion in faith and sacramental life”^[2] is to be understood and pursued today, and to present the work of ARCIC II in its entirety with appropriate commentaries to assist its reception.

In addressing these issues, the Commission has devoted time to introducing its new members to the history and achievements of ARCIC, and has benefited from the shared experience of those who were members of previous phases. Members have worked both in plenary sessions and in small groups, developing plans to address the tasks that derive from its mandate.

Over the coming years, the Commission will examine how the abiding goal of the dialogues is currently perceived and understood, and how that goal will inform the entire dialogue process.

In considering the method that ARCIC III will use, the Commission was particularly helped by the approach of ‘receptive ecumenism’^[3], which seeks to make ecumenical progress by learning from our partner, rather than simply asking our partner to learn from us. Receptive ecumenism is more about self-examination and inner conversion than convincing the other; Anglicans and Roman Catholics can help each other grow in faith, life and witness to Christ if they are open to being transformed by God’s grace mediated through each other. ARCIC is committed to modelling the receptive ecumenism it advocates. It intends to find ways to consult with the members of its churches at many levels as its work matures.

ARCIC III will present all the documents of ARCIC II, together with elucidations based upon responses already received, for reception by the relevant authorities of both communions, and for study at all levels of the churches’ life.

ARCIC III has decided that it will address the two principal topics together in a single document. It has drawn up a plan for its work that views the Church above all in the light of its rootedness in Christ through the Paschal Mystery. This focus on Jesus Christ, human and divine, gives the Commission a creative way to view the relationship between the local and universal in communion. The Commission will seek to develop a theological understanding of the human person, human society, and the new life of grace in Christ. This will provide a basis from which to explore how right ethical teaching is determined at universal and local levels. ARCIC will base this study firmly in scripture, tradition and reason, and draw on the previous work of the Commission. It will analyze some particular questions to elucidate how our two Communions

approach moral decision making, and how areas of tension for Anglicans and Roman Catholics might be resolved by learning from the other. ARCIC III does this conscious of the fact that what unites us is greater than what divides us.

The work of the Commission members has been enriched by sharing in the liturgical and spiritual life of the sisters and brothers of the Monastery of Bose, whose ecumenical mission and constant prayer have provided a supportive context for ARCIC. They were encouraged by visits from the bishop of the local diocese and by the bishop responsible for ecumenism for the northern Italian dioceses. The Commission will now organize papers and continue its work along the lines it has proposed, in preparation for its next meeting in 2012.

Appendix

Members of ARCIC III

Co-Chairs

The Most Reverend Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham, England

The Most Reverend David Moxon, Bishop of Waikato and Archbishop of the Dioceses of New Zealand

Roman Catholics

The Reverend Robert Christian OP, Angelicum University, Rome

The Most Reverend Arthur Kennedy, auxiliary bishop, Archdiocese of Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Professor Paul D. Murray, Durham University, England

Professor Janet E. Smith, Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit, Michigan, USA

The Reverend Vimal Tirimanna CSsR, Alphonsianum University, Rome

The Very Reverend Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB, Ampleforth Abbey, England

Sister Teresa Okure SHCJ, Catholic Institute of West Africa, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

The Reverend Adelbert Denaux, Dean; Tilburg School of Theology, Utrecht, The Netherlands

Anglicans

Dr Paula Gooder, Birmingham, England

The Right Reverend Christopher Hill, Bishop of Guildford, England

The Reverend Mark McIntosh, University of Durham, England.

The Right Reverend Nkosinathi Ndwandwe, Bishop Suffragan of Natal, Southern Area, South Africa

The Right Reverend Linda Nicholls, Area Bishop for Trent-Durham, Diocese of Toronto, Canada

The Reverend Michael Poon, Trinity Theological College, Singapore (unable to attend)

The Reverend Canon Nicholas Sagovsky, London, England

The Reverend Peter Sedgwick, St Michael's College, Llandaff, Wales

The Reverend Charles Sherlock (consultant), Bendigo, Australia.

The work of the Commission is supported by the Co-Secretaries, Monsignor Mark Langham (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity) and Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan (Anglican Communion Office) and by Canon Jonathan Goodall, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs. The Commission is grateful for the administrative support and photographs provided by Mr Neil Vigers of the Anglican Communion Office.

- [1.](#) For a list of members, see appendix.
- [2.](#) 1966 Common Declaration of Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey.
- [3.](#) cf Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic learning: Exploring a way for Contemporary Ecumenism., ed. Paul D. Murray., OUP 2008