

Duncan Center, Florida, USA 29 November-5 December 2003



The Inter Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations (IASCER) met at the Duncan Center, Delray Beach, Florida, from 29 November to 5 December, 2003. The Rt Revd Christopher Epting, Deputy to the Presiding Bishop for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations welcomed the Commission on behalf of the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Most Revd Drexel Wellington Gomez, Archbishop and Primate of the Church in the Province of the West Indies, took the chair. The Rt Revd Dr Geoffrey Rowell, Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe, was elected as Vice-Chair.

IASCER continued its work of reviewing all the present international ecumenical dialogues involving Anglicans, and provincial and regional initiatives towards unity with other Christians. In particular, it evaluated progress in church unity proposals in Scotland, South Africa and the United States.

The Commission reflected with concern on the impact of recent developments in the life of the Anglican Communion for ecumenical relations between Anglican and other Christian churches. It received with regret the news that the meeting of the Anglican - Oriental Orthodox International Commission had been postponed, and that the plenary meeting of the International Anglican - Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) had been put on hold.

However, it welcomed the establishment of a new sub-committee of IARCCUM, which, at the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury, would address the ecclesiological concerns raised in Anglican - Roman Catholic dialogue by recent developments. It noted that the Most Revd Frank Griswold, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church (USA) had resigned as Anglican Co-Chair of the Anglican - Roman Catholic International Commission, and expressed gratitude for the work he had done. IASCER looked forward to the appointment of his successor, and to the completion of the current phase of the Commission's work with the publication of an Agreed Statement on the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Commission looked forward to the completion of the work of the Anglican Communion - Baptist World Alliance International Conversations, due to report in 2004, and the establishment of a new Anglican - Lutheran International Commission, which it is hoped would be formed by 2005. It also welcomed the approval and signing of the Covenant between the Church of England and the Methodist Church of Great Britain, and the signing of the Covenant between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches in Papua New Guinea.

IASCER received reports on the work of the Inter Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission (IATDC), the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation (IALC), and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches.

The Commission thanks the Revd Steve Fregeau and his wife, Pat, together with all the staff of the Duncan Center for the warmth of their welcome and the hospitality

received, and the Rt Revd Christopher Epting for organising a short excursion around the waterways of Fort Lauderdale and a dinner at which the Bishop of Southeast Florida, the Rt Revd Leo Frade and Mrs Frade were guests. The Commission also enjoyed the hospitality of the Church of Bethesda by the Sea, West Palm Beach, for Sunday worship and lunch.

The Commission consists of representatives from each international dialogue involving Anglicans, including the multilateral dialogue of Faith and Order, and of certain other commissions and networks, and consultants who bring particular regional or theological expertise.

Present at the meeting at the Duncan Center were: the Revd Prebendary Dr Paul Avis, the Revd Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan, the Revd Canon Gregory K Cameron (Secretary), the Revd Dr William Crockett, the Rt Revd Christopher Epting, the Rt Revd Dr John Gladstone, the Most Revd Drexel W Gomez (Chair), the Revd Canon Jonathan Gough, the Rt Revd John Hind, the Revd Canon Luke Pato, the Rt Revd Dr Geoffrey Rowell, the Revd Canon Professor J Robert Wright, and the Revd Dr Karackattil George Pothen of the Mar Thoma Church. Mrs Christine Codner and the Revd Terrie Robinson of the Anglican Communion Office provided administrative assistance for the meeting.

The members of the Commission received with sadness the news of the death of one of their members, the Rt Revd Justus Marcus, Regional Bishop of Saldanha Bay in the Diocese of Cape Town, in the course of the meeting. They send their condolences to the Revd Mrs Sarah Marcus, his wife, also a member of the Commission, and to the family of Bishop Justus.

The next plenary meeting of IASCER is scheduled for 4-10 December 2004.

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