

Union of Utrecht NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2019

Meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council – A report from the Old Catholic perspective



The 17th meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council was held from 28 April to 5 May 2019; this is one of the four so-called Instruments of Communion linking Anglican Churches worldwide. Representatives from 37 of the 40 ecclesiastical Provinces of the Anglican Communion gathered at a luxury hotel in Hong Kong, where they enjoyed the overwhelming hospitality of the three dioceses of the Anglican Province of Hong Kong, Hong

Kong Sheng Kung Hui. The representative of the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht, Bishop Schoon, attended the meeting as an ecumenical guest.

The theme of the program was 'Equipping God's People: Going Deeper in Intentional Discipleship'. This theme followed on from the previous meeting in 2016 in Lusaka, Zambia. Attempts were made at that meeting to overcome the disagreements that threatened to split the Anglican Communion, this was done by focusing on what unites the Anglicans

For the whole article see:

http://www.utrechter-union.org/seite/594/meeting_of_the_anglican_consulta or in German:
http://www.utrechter-union.org/seite/592/treffen_des_anglican_consultativ

Communiqué of the International Old Catholic Bishops' Conference 2019 meeting in Lublin/PL

The International Old Catholic Bishops' Conference (IBC) met in Lublin from 24th to 27th June 2019.

Communion with the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church

The Bishops' Conference received the final report of the dialogue between the two churches. This clarified and resolved various questions that had been raised. On receipt of the report, the IBC pronounced Communion with the Mar Thoma Church.

International Roman Catholic/Old Catholic Dialogue (IRAD)

The IBC was able to welcome Prof. Slawomir Pawlowski from the Roman Catholic University of Lublin, who, as Professor of Ecumenism, reflected on the IRAD documents from a Roman Catholic perspective and then opened discussion with the Bishops. After additional internal deliberations, the Bishops adopted the following statement:

The International Old Catholic Bishops' Conference (IBC) receives the Second Report of the International Roman Catholic/Old Catholic Dialogue Commission (IRAD II) dated 2016 and thanks the members of the bilateral commission for their work.

After the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church and the Old Catholic Churches of the Utrecht Union entered into conversation. Then, in 2004, these talks led to the opening of official dialogue between the two Churches, the second phase of which has been completed with this present report.

This report builds on the content of the First Report 2009 (IRAD I) and is intended to provide further explanation of outstanding or insufficiently clarified issues. The issues in question are: the relationship between the local church and the universal church, in view of papal primacy; the question of dogma and infallibility; open questions about the Marian dogmas of 1854 and 1950; clarifications on the ordination of Women to priestly ministry; and clarifications on the inherent connection between Eucharistic communion and Church communion.

The IBC welcomes the in-depth communion-ecclesiology that characterizes the document and in which we see a decisive step towards resolving the so-called "family quarrel". We hope that this ecclesiological approach will enable the outstanding issues to move closer to consensus so that church communion becomes attainable.



Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) and Anglican-Old Catholic International Coordinating Council (AOCICC)

The 17th meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council took place at end of April. The gathering of representatives of 37 of the 40 church provinces was joined by Bishop Schoon for the Utrecht Union. The [Final Report of the AOCICC](#) for the period from 2013 to 2019 was brought before the meeting. This presentation of the work of the Commission was impressive and speaks for a good continuation of very positive cooperation within our church communion. With the presentation of the report to both the ACC and now the IBC, the work of the Commission has come to an end. It will be reconvened after the next Lambeth Conference in 2020 and continue its work. The IBC thanked all members of this Commission for their commitment to deepening our church communion. In future, the Old Catholic Churches will be represented by Bishop Rein.

Orthodox-Old Catholic International Standing Working Group

Bishop Rein resigns as co-chair of this group. The task is now assumed by Bishop Ring. Other membership of the group remains unchanged.

Communication and Administration

The IBC again looked at its internal structures, namely at the organization of the communication and the bureau. Based on preparatory work undertaken with the support of a specialist, the first structural changes have already been considered. These will be taken up at future meetings of the bureau and should result in essential, cost-saving changes in communication and office structures by 1st July 2020.

Anglican/Old Catholic Bishops' Meeting

A meeting with the Anglican Bishops responsible for mainland Europe was held from the evening of 24th June until lunchtime on 25th June. Discussions focused on issues of joint projects, the Willibrord Society, the AOCICC report and opportunities for closer cooperation in the areas served by the Old Catholic Churches on the European mainland.

Miscellaneous

The Bishops took the opportunity to wish Bishop Wiktor Wysoczański a belated happy 80th birthday and to thank him for his years of episcopal service. He is the most senior Bishop in the IBC and for some years has been the only Old Catholic Bishop in Poland.

Special thanks were also offered to Bishop Michael Burrows of the Church of Ireland. For the past seven years, he has attended meetings as the delegate of the Archbishop of Canterbury and his presence has been an enrichment to both Churches.

The planned date for the next meeting of the International Old Catholic Congress was also announced: it will take place from 1st to 4th September 2022 in Germany, probably in Bonn.

The next ordinary meeting of the International Old Catholic Bishops' Conference will be from 21st to 25th June 2020 in Prague, Czech Republic.

For the whole article see:

<http://www.utrechter-union.org/?b=599> or in German:

<http://www.utrechter-union.org/?b=595>

Proximity, distance and power. Church and pastoral care in the #MeToo Age

The 46th International Old Catholic Theologians' Conference was held in Wislikofen/AG in Switzerland from 26-30 August 2019. The topical theme taken for the Conference, "Proximity, distance and power. Church and pastoral care in the #MeToo age", covered issues which are of concern to both



society and the Church.

The first area to be addressed looked at measures and guidelines for the prevention of abuse adopted in recent years by several Old Catholic Churches and also by Churches of the Anglican Communion such as the Church of England and in the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe. The presentations placed these developments in the wider historical context of social changes, particularly in gender roles and sexuality. These

changes arose during the second half of the 20th century, at least in Western societies, and have been decisive factors in the discourse of society as a whole. Churches are part of these processes of social change and must react to them.

A second theme was devoted to power, office and gender. "Office" was used to refer to clergy in general, but in several presentations was applied more specifically from the standpoint of a bishop, synod president or choirmaster. Every presentation showed that power, like authority, is always characterized by some form of recognition (or sometimes of denial) by others. Today, any reflections on power – not least those influenced by critical theories such as feminist theology or modern thinkers like Michel Foucault – always have to consider power relations and power-in-relation. Seen

in this context, power is always a form of coexistence and, in democratic and synodal systems, is always accountable.

The third thematic area was related to the previous two and focused on pastoral power and the crossing of boundaries in pastoral relations. It was stressed that in pastoral relations the responsibility always lies with the pastor. Workshops on youth pastoral care, trauma therapy, and church engagement in social hotspots demonstrated the wide range of the topic and the breadth of social relations and pastoral responsibility.

Some 35 people, from Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Poland and the Netherlands took part in the conference, most of them were working in the field of pastoral care. For small churches, like the Old Catholic Churches, the question of maintaining a good balance between proximity and distance in relationships was always in the background, now, with the topics discussed at this conference, it stands centre-stage, explicitly illuminated as never before.

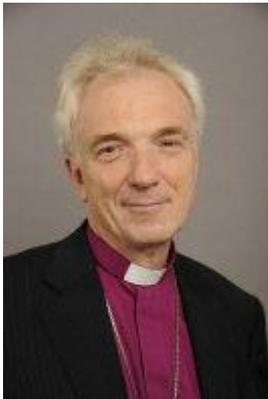
At the end of the conference, many participants expressed their wish to develop the topic over the coming years, for example at a future International Old Catholic Theologians' Conference; but the subject should first become rooted in every single Old Catholic Church and foster in-depth awareness and, if necessary, further concrete guidelines for action.

Source:

<http://www.utrechter-union.org/?b=603> or in German:

<http://www.utrechter-union.org/?b=601>

Archbishop Joris Vercammen announces his retirement



The Archbishop of Utrecht, Dr Joris Vercammen (66), has announced in a letter to his ministers and parishes that he will retire on 11 January 2020. In his initial statement, Archbishop Vercammen said, "I have chosen this time because it is good for the Church and good for me". The church will be undergoing organizational changes and it will be good for this new future to be shaped by new people.

Archbishop Vercammen was elected Archbishop of Utrecht on 11 March 2000 and consecrated Bishop in Utrecht Cathedral on 1 July of the same year. As Archbishop of Utrecht, he not only directs his own diocese, but is also President of the Bishops' Conference. After the retirement of the Archbishop, which will take place on 11 January 2020 at a celebration of Holy Eucharist in the Cathedral of St. Gertrudis in Utrecht, the Chapter of the Cathedral will take over the administration of the diocese. This body is also responsible for the election of a new Archbishop. The election takes place within six weeks; eligible voters being the clergy together with the lay representatives of the archdiocese of Utrecht.

Source:

http://www.utrechter-union.org/page/605/archbishop_joris_vercammen_annou or in German:

http://www.utrechter-union.org/seite/604/erzbischof_joris_vercammen_wird