

International Conversations Between the Anglican Communion and the Baptist World Alliance

North American Communiqué 2003

The North American phase of the international theological conversations between Anglicans and Baptists was held at Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, from 10 - 12 September 2003. This regional meeting follows five previous phases held in Norwich (for Europe) in 2000, Yangon (for Asia/Pacific) in 2001, Nairobi (for Africa), in 2002, Santiago, Chile (for Latin America) and Nassau (for the Caribbean) in January 2003. Participants came from the United States and Canada, representing their respective Churches and joined the members of the "Continuation Committee" which is conducting these regional gatherings on behalf of the Baptist World Alliance and the Anglican Communion.

The Anglican and Baptist representatives gave an overview of the life of their respective communions in North America. Seven substantive papers were presented on Common Challenges facing Anglicans and Baptists in North America, Baptist Life in North America, A North American Baptist Understanding of Continuity, two papers on The Nature and Role of the Church from Anglican and Baptist perspectives and paired papers on Authority.

The plenary discussion drew together insights from the American and Canadian contexts and related them to the themes emerging from previous regional conversations, namely: continuity and story; the meaning of recognition; mission and ministry; baptism and Christian initiation; membership of the Church; the Eucharist or Lord's Supper; oversight and episcopate; and confessing the apostolic faith. Discussion focussed on how each tradition handled diversity of views within their tradition, and the nature of denominational allegiance as well as the diversity between the two communions. The meeting began with a celebration of an Anglican Eucharist in the local parish church, and included shared prayer and devotions conducted by Baptists and Anglicans. The meeting was held by kind invitation of Acadia University, and the lunches were hosted each day by the Acadia Divinity College. The participants were guests for dinner at the home of the Dean of Arts, Dr Bruce Matthews and his wife one evening, whilst Archbishop Arthur Peters, former Archbishop of the ecclesiastical province of Canada, Dr Gail Dinter-Gottlieb, President of Acadia University and Dr Lee McDonald, Principal of Acadia Divinity College, joined the commission for lunch in the course of the meeting.

ABIC is the official instrument of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Baptist World Alliance engaged in theological discussions which have the following objectives:

- To enable Anglican/Baptists to learn from each other and to deepen understanding of relationships between our two communions in the light of their histories.
- To share with each other how we understand the Christian faith and to work toward a common confession of the Apostolic Faith.
- To identify issues of doctrine and the nature of the church to be explored further in possible future conversations.
- To look for ways to cooperate in mission and community activities and increase our fellowship and common witness to the Gospel.

The current phase will be concluded in March 2004 in Oxford, United Kingdom, when the Continuation committee consisting of four Anglicans and four Baptists who will draft a report following the regional meetings to be submitted to the Baptist World Alliance General Council in 2004 and the Anglican Consultative Council in 2005.

The following persons participated in the Nova Scotia meeting:

ANGLICANS

Continuation Committee:

Bruce Matthews (Co-Chair), Canada
Gregory Cameron (Co-Secretary), Anglican Communion Office
Paul Avis, England
Rubie Nottage, the Caribbean
(Terrie Robinson, administrative staff, Anglican Communion Office)
Archbishop Samuel San Si Htay (Myanmar) was unable to be present

North American Representatives:

Alyson Barnett-Cowan (Anglican Church of Canada)
Howard Loewen (Episcopal Church, USA)
Saundra Richardson (Episcopal Church, USA)
Ronald Stevenson (Anglican Church of Canada)
Douglas Theuner (Episcopal Church, USA)
David Wheeler (representing Episcopal Church, USA)

BAPTISTS

Continuation Committee:

Paul Fiddes, (Co-Chair), England
Tony Cupit, (Co-Secretary), Baptist World Alliance
William Brackney, North America (proxy for Ken Manley, Australia)
Malcolm Yarnell, North America (Southern Baptist Convention)

North American Representatives:

Curtis Freeman (Cooperative Baptist Fellowship)
Steve Harmon (Cooperative Baptist Fellowship)
Alan Stanford (Southern Baptist Convention)
Andrew MacRae (Canadian Baptist Ministries)
Audrey Morikawa (Canadian Baptist Ministries)