

MEMORANDUM and RECOMMENDATIONS

St. Albans 1985

The Anglican/Oriental Orthodox Churches Forum was held at Verulam House, St Albans, United Kingdom from 7-11 October 1985 at the invitation of the Anglican Consultative Council. (...)

The forum was the outcome of a brief informal meeting between representatives of the Anglican Communion and the Oriental Orthodox Churches present at the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver (1982). A representative of the Church of the East was invited as an observer. The Forum was convened in order to explore the possibilities of strengthening mutual relationships and deepening our understanding of each other.

In three days of friendly and candid conversations, various areas of possible co-operation were examined, including:

- a) theological scholarships
- b) pastoral co-operation in different regions
- c) theological conversations

More specifically there was agreement on the following proposals.

1. It was suggested that theological scholarships be mainly for post-graduate study for students who have completed their basic training in their own institutions. It was emphasized that Anglican students should also be encouraged to spend some time in Oriental Orthodox theological institutions and monasteries as part of their regular training for the ministry.
2. Theological seminaries of the Oriental Orthodox churches could be assisted, especially in the building up of libraries, in the supply of new books, and in subscriptions to scholarly journals.
3. The journals and magazines published by the churches of the two communions could be exchanged with each other on a more systematic basis.
4. The Forum specially emphasized the need for regional co-ordinating bodies for promoting understanding and co-operation among the churches of the two communions, eg. in the USA and Canada, in the Middle East, in Australia and New Zealand, in the United Kingdom etc. The heads of churches on both sides should ask their regional authorities to take decisive action in this regard.
5. On the question of co-operation in the pastoral sphere, three different scenarios were considered a) that of a large city London or New York with substantial numbers of Orthodox, and where independent Oriental Orthodox parishes with full-time priests could be established; b) medium sized towns with a few Oriental Orthodox Christians who cannot afford a church or a full-time priest, and c) isolated Oriental Orthodox in other locations. In scenario a) the Anglican Communion can help the Oriental Orthodox churches to find a place of worship and to maintain a priest of their own and vice versa; and also in setting up local councils of the various Oriental Orthodox Churches for mutual support and co-operation. In scenario b) help could be given for Oriental Orthodox groups to meet regularly under lay leadership for prayer and study and vice versa. In scenario c) fellowship could be extended to isolated individuals of one communion by families and pastors of the other. It was recognized that so long as the two communions were not in communion with each other there would be certain unavoidable constraints in the extent of pastoral co-operation.
6. It was suggested that there should be exploration of:
 - a) the possibilities of a joint theological commission, to examine its financial feasibility, and to define its objectives and purposes if found feasible;
 - b) whether theological discussions can be undertaken and prepared for at various levels - by small groups, by regional meetings, be secondary research on work already done in other bilateral conversations etc.
7. It was suggested that a small group of scholars be requested to produce an annotated select bibliography of publications on the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the various churches of the Anglican Communion.
8. There be a small exploratory group based on London to follow up the recommendations above and to maintain

contact with the regional co-ordinating groups.

At the end of the meeting the participants were invited by His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury to his residence. The last day of the meeting began with a joint Oriental Orthodox liturgy in the Anglican Cathedral of St Alban at the Shrine of St Alban, an English martyr of the third century, and ended with concluding worship in Canterbury Cathedral.

[ALBERT GERGARDS, HEINZGERD BRAKMANN, Hrsg., *Die koptische Kirche. Einführung in das ägyptische Christentum* (Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1994)182-184]