

STATEMENT BY THE EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP IN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION
IN RESPONSE TO
THE IASCUFO NAIROBI-CAIRO PROPOSALS
(“Renewing the Instruments of the Anglican Communion”)¹

EFAC welcomes the opportunity to offer an initial outline response to this important report, thanking its writers for their sincere and prolonged engagement with the broken nature of our Anglican Communion. What follows sets out what we understand to be its central themes, and aspects of it which we welcome and aspects where we have questions and concerns.

It is clear from the document that these proposals have been produced in response to two interconnected problems:

1. The anachronism of colonial era structures for the Anglican Communion when the vast majority of active members are now found in the Global South.
2. The broken and impaired relationships of communion which have arisen due to doctrinal differences, especially to do with biblical anthropology and marriage. These have been in contention for several decades and been the subject of previous reports offering different paths of renewal. They have become more acute since the Bishops and General Synod of the Church of England opened the way for the blessing of same sex relationships in 2023.

The proposals can be summarised as follows:

1. A number of amendments to the classic description of the Anglican Communion adopted by the Lambeth Conference including the deletion of ‘*in communion with the See of Canterbury*’ to be replaced by, *inter alia*, ‘*historic connection with the See of Canterbury*’ (76)².
2. A number of changes to the existing Instruments, notably a rotating presidency of the ACC.

We welcome a number of elements in the report including:

1. The removal of ‘*in communion with the See of Canterbury*’. This description has been used to try and delegitimise the new orthodox Provinces, recognised by both the GSFA and GAFCON, and to imply that any breaking of communion with Canterbury is tantamount to leaving the Communion. The recent decisions of the Church of England have meant that, irrespective of who the next Archbishop of Canterbury is, he or she will not be a person whose leadership can be acknowledged by many members of the Communion as *primus inter pares*.
2. The recognition of the sad reality that as currently constituted the churches of the Anglican Communion have fallen even further short of the Church’s call to be “*one, holy, catholic and apostolic*”: no longer having in common that they “*uphold and propagate the Catholic and Apostolic faith and order*” but simply seeking to do so; and no longer bound to each other “*by mutual loyalty*” due to recent actions by various provinces, most recently the Church of England. As a result, it is accepted that the churches of the Communion are no longer in full communion with each other but only seeking “*the highest degree of communion possible*”.
3. The statement that “*Solemn calls to unity may sometimes function as an abuse of power, as they seek to enforce a closeness of relationship that would suppress or deny important differences*”

¹ https://www.anglicancommunion.org/ecumenism/iascufo/the-nairobi-cairo-proposals.aspx?fbclid=IwY2xjawHAJeJleHRuA2FlbQlxMQABHWMGRsAKocYvrMrgB8RwmHUGcJdgDsMQCJubQOIzyxQt1CoAnVSOhOfa0g_aem_PX6oHSgsfRp0R3vgcTxDIQ&sfnsn=scwspmo

² Numbers in parenthesis refer to paragraph numbers in the IASCUFO paper.

(45) and the call to those “*who call themselves progressive or liberal...to grant graciously the degree of seriousness with which their fellow Anglicans take the matters at hand and concede the consequences of some degree of diminished communion*” (48).

4. The acknowledgment that “*The Covenantal Structure of the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches ... may be viewed ... as a helpful contribution to the discernment of doctrinal and ethical truth within the Communion ... in hopeful service of the unity and faithfulness of the Anglican Communion*” (56).

All this makes clear that earlier attempts to reform the Instruments by seeking moratoria, repentance, and renewed covenantal affirmations and commitments have not succeeded. We continue to hope and pray that those whose actions have led to this tragic failure will repent in order that fellowship may be restored and we welcome the work of GSFA and GAFCON to reset the Communion and create structures which can enable full communion to continue between churches and faithful Anglicans based on Catholic and Apostolic faith and order.

Questions and concerns:

In forthcoming months as the report and its proposals are digested, discussed and developed in preparation for the ACC meeting in 2026 we hope attention will be given to various questions and concerns, including for us:

1. An explanation for the absence of any engagement with GAFCON. Engagement with GAFCON will be essential if IASCUFO is fully to engage with the deep differences and divisions within the Anglican Communion.
2. Whether the bold redefinition of the Communion is sufficiently reflected in the practical proposals which are seemingly minimalist and risk being largely symbolic but leaving the underlying power structures of the Communion intact (for example, in the continued parity between all 5 historic regions despite the very different number of worshipping Anglicans in them). We are concerned that more needs to be done, given the unprecedented levels of mistrust and non-participation in the legacy instruments, if the “*ecclesial deficit*” we face is to be addressed.
3. It would appear that the underlying assumption implied in the theological methodology of IASCUFO’s approach is that, contrary to the Communion’s clear past statements, the teaching of Scripture on matters of human sexuality is unclear and so the areas of disagreement are to be treated as *adiaphora* and the subject of unending dialogue until the Lord returns (43, 57). Is this what is being claimed?
4. Does the revised definition of the Anglican Communion not significantly water down the historic identity of global Anglicanism and (in contrast to the GSFA Cairo Covenant and GAFCON’s Jerusalem Declaration) fail to offer an ecclesiology clearly under the authority of the Word of God?
5. In particular, in contrast to the Cairo Covenant and earlier attempts to address the Communion’s travails such as *The Windsor Report* and the proposed *Anglican Communion Covenant*, there appears to be no place for exercising discipline against teaching judged to be contrary to Scripture. While the recognition of the need for distance or differentiation is welcome, how does a “*commitment to making room for each other*” not amount to acceptance of “*serious doctrinal error and moral jeopardy*” (48) within the Anglican Communion?

Conclusion

EFAC Global therefore welcomes the full acknowledgment by IASCUFO of the wounds of division in the Communion and the proposal that the Communion is no longer to be defined by relationship to Canterbury. It is vital, however, that in ongoing reflection on our calling as the Church, the state of the Communion, and the report’s proposals to find a new way forward, that we are not found to come under the Lord’s judgment through the prophet Jeremiah: ‘*they have healed the wound of my people lightly*’ (8:11).

Bishop Stephen Hale
Acting General Secretary EFAC Global

Bishop Keith Sinclair
Chair of EFAC Global Trustees