

## **Al-Azhar Cairo 2002**

The Joint Commission, which is composed of a delegation from the Anglican (Episcopal) Church and the Permanent Committee of Al-Azhar for Dialogue between the Monotheistic Religions, held its second meeting at the Office of the Sheikh Al-Azhar on Tuesday and Wednesday, the 3rd and 4th of Rajab 1423, which corresponds to the 10th and 11th September 2002, in accord with the text of the Agreement signed by both sides at Lambeth Palace on January 30th, 2002.

At the beginning, the Joint Commission expressed its feelings of deep gratitude for the opportunity to renew and deepen the friendship between both parties through engaging in frank and encouraging dialogue and co-operation.

The dialogue was noted for its openness and constructive spirit.

The Commission discussed the topics that were on its agenda:

### **1. Peace is inseparable from justice**

The Commission noted after discussing the papers on this topic presented by both sides that Al Azhar Al Sharif and the Anglican Communion agree on the importance of not separating peace from justice, and that the sacred texts of both religions clearly affirm peace and the realisation of justice among people, and reject oppression and partiality.

### **2. Acceptance of the other from theological, historical and practical perspectives**

The Commission noted that the Agreement on dialogue signed by both sides states that one of its goals is:  
'To encourage Anglicans to understand Islam and to encourage Muslims to understand the Christian faith.'

After listening to the statements of the members from both sides, and the scriptural texts cited in the two religions, the Commission affirmed that both faiths believe in the acceptance of the other and in living together in brotherhood, co-operation, love and peace, rejecting aggression from one group towards the other.

The Joint Commission called on religious leaders, both Muslim and Christian, to strive to provide accurate and respectful teaching about the other faith, and to correct misrepresentation about it. It also stressed the importance of accurate information about both faiths in the curricula of schools and colleges; the portrayal of each faith should be without distortion and acceptable to its own adherents. The Commission also encouraged the exchange of visits among religious leaders.

### **3. The Stance of the Commission concerning current events in the world, especially in the Middle East**

The Commission discussed crisis situations in various parts of the world such as Iraq, Sudan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Kashmir, Indonesia, Chechnya and the Philippines. The Commission called for the implementation of the principle of peace which is inseparable from justice for the benefit of all.

The Commission affirmed that the current crisis in the Holy Land is creating an inhuman situation for all concerned, is undermining international efforts and resolutions for reconciliation, and presents a threat to world peace. The Commission expressed its support for all efforts to bring about security and a just peace for all. It also supported the ongoing work of the Permanent Committee which resulted from the Alexandria Conference of January 2002. This Conference encouraged representatives of the three religions in Palestine and Israel to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict through peaceful means.

As to the possibility of war in Iraq the Commission affirmed its concern that the authority of the United Nations should not be by-passed, and that further efforts should be made to seek peaceful solutions.

On the first anniversary of the events of September 11th 2001, members of the Commission committed themselves afresh to working together for a world in which all human beings can live side by side in peace, justice and mutual respect.

11 September 2002  
4 Rajab 1423