

Covenant Committee  
The Episcopal Church-The Anglican Church of the Region of Central America  
(Iglesia Anglicana de la Región de América Central, IARCA)  
Hotel Hilton Garden, Guatemala  
Tuesday 5 April 2016-Wednesday 6 April 2016

**Tuesday 5 April 2016**

Present:

Representatives of Iglesia Anglicana de la Región de América Central IARCA

Marco Austin, Esq., Vice-President of the Committee, Panamá

The Rt. Rev. Armando Guerra, Guatemala

The Rt. Rev. Julio Murray, Panamá

The Rev. Harold Dixon, Nicaragua

The Rt. Rev. Juan David Alvarado, El Salvador

The Rt. Rev. Sturdy Downs, Primate of IARCA, Nicaragua

The Rt. Rev. Hector Monterroso, Secretary de IARCA, Costa Rica

Representatives de TEC

The Rt. Rev. Susan Goff, President of the Committee

The Rt. Rev. Lloyd Allen, Executive Council liaison, Honduras

Doctor Charles (Chuck) Stewart

The Rev. Canon Lee Alison Crawford

Visitor: the Rev. Ramón Ovalle, Chaplain

Staff: The Rev. Glenda McQueen

**I. Morning Prayer**

The Rev. Ramón officiated at Morning Prayer.

**II. Naming Secretary for the Meeting:**

**The committee named the Rev. Canon Lee Alison Crawford as secretary for this triennium and the next.**

**III. Discussion of the past and what we would like to do during this meeting**

The discussion focused on the following themes:

- Not to talk so much about the economic challenges, which is frustrating; rather, talk more about ministry.
- Return to our starting point: a committee of equals among equals. Return to a committee that works together. What sort of relationship will we have going forward?
- New: Know more about the covenant, work with GC 2016-A016.
- How to support these projects? Maybe with a new structure. The mission of IARCA is advancing and moving forward but there has not been enough willingness to work with this mission.
- See where we are at this point in time with the covenant, the entry point. Where are we in the 40-year financial plan, but also where are we in terms of theology, education, self-formation and self-sufficiency?

Glenda provided a review of the history of the budget cuts from TEC and the fact that there have been two separate documents, one from which IARCA has worked and another from which TEC worked.

- We must know more about IARCA's life of ministry.
- The animating spirit of the covenant has been lost.
- This covenant is a project between the two churches. Who can transmit this spirit? What remains is formal, simply the covenant and documents related to it.

**The covenant committee decided to take the following action: Write a communiqué to Executive Council**

- The Covenant Committee can make resolutions and changes if both parties are in agreement.
- The Covenant Committee can create a task force to revise the covenant.
- The Covenant Committee can make recommendations to Executive Council to create a task force.

**Possible Action:**

- Reinitiate a covenant, a new document — we would not say that this covenant has ended, but we would revisit it and, how?
- Add a glossary of pertinent terms and how we understand them in this covenant, give definitions to key words.
- Include a description of life in IARCA. In a revised covenant, present a sense of IARCA and where it is now after 18 years of autonomy.

The committee broke for lunch.

#### IV. IARCA Report

*Costa Rica:* The big topic of conversation and worry is immigrants. The Episcopal Church of Costa Rica (IECR) has a hostel for three families (average size of family is 7 people) who can stay for up to three months. They need to complete an application process as refugees. The IECR works with the United Thank Offering and Episcopal Migration Ministries. Costa Rica has a clear-cut, but not rapid, application process.

Second, the church is taking concrete actions concerning the environment. All actions come from the Five Marks of Mission, and the church is especially considering these during the Fifty Days of Easter. They are discussing wind, hydro-electric or volcanic energy.

The majority of priests in the IERC do not receive a salary; they are bi-vocational (there are between 18-20 priests).

*Panamá:* Five Marks of Mission: Each year the church works with one of the marks. This year they are working with the Fourth Mark, injustice in society, the indigenous, especially children and their reality in Panamá.

The church is working on forming promoters of human rights. Part of the dynamic is that the people know when they have been violated. They are discussing what is the work of human rights and if it has an effect or not. They are working in ecumenical and interfaith teams (Jewish, Muslim and Bahai). They also are working in conjunction with Trinity Wall Street and Haiti. Young Adult Service Corps is also working in this area.

**South-South Companionship:** The Panamanian Church is engaging in a companion relationship with the Church in Honduras, focusing on spirituality and work with youth. They are hoping to achieve practical actions.

*El Salvador:* El Salvador is a very vulnerable country in terms of the environment and social challenges. There are on an average 25 deaths per 24-hour period. These challenges make the work of the church difficult. The Rt. Rev. Juan David Alvarado has just finished his first year as bishop diocesan. With the church, he has established a mission plan that will bring the Good News without any discrimination to all: the Episcopal Anglican Church of El Salvador (IAES) is an open church in mission and renewal. The diocese of the IAES covers the entire country and works as a sower of peace and justice for every person through the sacraments and Holy Scripture as it strengthens the search for peace.

**Evangelism:** Ministry of Diversity with youth, people with handicaps, Religions for Peace and FE-CLAI (Ecumenical Forum of the Latin American Council of Churches). The IAES supports four schools, a program of integral health, the Bishop's Program for Justice, which works with immigrants, human rights and with the LGBTI community. They are working on forming their seminary for raising up clergy. Today there are 17 congregations, 7 priests (some who are not in good health). The big question is: how to go forward as an inclusive and compassionate church? How to work in a culture of peace and in the environment?

*Nicaragua:* People left for Costa Rica or the United States and they did not return, which affected the mission of the church. The goal has been to establish strong congregations. The bishop is in the final years of his administration. He wishes to leave a stronger church. The church in Nicaragua has not had companion dioceses; it has chosen a difficult path that is not popular but it is radical. Everything is for and by the Nicaraguan people. There are 24 congregations. The work still wears out the clergy. Nicaragua was the first diocese [of IARCA] to think about having two dioceses and even thought of dividing up into four, but did not.

*Guatemala:* The idea of 'diocese' comes from The Episcopal Church and the Church in Guatemala has found out that having two has not worked out well, as it is not a concept familiar to the region. Thus, the church has given up that idea because there are other priorities: the election of bishop diocesan in 2017, as Bishop Guerra will retire in 2018. There are 8 seminarians. The diocese supports a scholarship program with help from companion dioceses. It helps the campesinos. Within the congregations of the church, there are 7 languages spoken (3 congregations are English-speaking). The diocese has a health ministry, youth ministry. They are working toward inclusion and are working on incorporating Mayan culture. The church is diversifying its structures; five congregations are working together in a pilot program.

*In general:* The relationships between the dioceses of IARCA are good. There is a lot that after 18 years of walking together is functioning well. What will happen, no one knows. All are involved in theological education. The dioceses want to do more and more things together but right now the province is a family with five members. When there is a will, there is resolve. Since forming the province, three bishops have been consecrated under the canons of IARCA, Panamá (Julio Murray), Costa Rica (Héctor Monterroso) and El Salvador (Juan David Alvarado). Bishop Wilson (CR) died and Bishop Barahona (ES) retired, two bishops consecrated under the canons of The Episcopal Church. Throughout this time period, the province has maintained three essentials: theological education, the women's group and the United Thank Offering. Each diocese has two students involved in theological education. The women worked well even before autonomy and they continue to work well; they are self-sufficient and meet every year in a different diocese. The group of UTO of Central America also continues in mission by giving grants to ministries within IARCA. The provincial synod is trying to maintain lines of communication between the dioceses.

All the resolutions of the 2014 Synod came from the Five Marks of Mission. In any event, if members cannot meet in person, they still maintain open lines of communication; it is getting harder and harder to meet together. The provincial budget is roughly \$25,000.

Today there is discussion about forming permanent deacons. In 2-4 years, the province will have a permanent diaconate. Right now, bishops are distributing material about the diaconate.

Right now the province is focusing on the Fifth Mark of Mission.

It also is revising the provincial canons. Those pertaining to the election of a primate are not clear: if there is not consensus in the House of Bishops, there is no process forward. Study, reflection and suggestions on how to amend the canons is not only about the election of a primate but pertinent in other areas.

The Episcopal Church should give IARCA a proportion for theological education; it is in the covenant. TEC also should return to IARCA a proportion of the sale of the seminary (CETALC). How should it be shared? Between 2002-2006 Bishops Allen and Barahona wanted to talk about this fund with TEC but they were not able to. We should reinitiate a conversation about these funds. Bishop Allen will speak about this matter at the June 2016 Executive Council meeting.

### Wednesday 6 April 2016

The committee reconvened after a successful and happy morning with the Women's Assembly of IARCA.

#### V. Presentation of the Minutes from Panamá, March 2014

**The Rev. Lee Alison Crawford moved that the Minutes be accepted as presented. Dr Chuck Stewart seconded the motion. It was accepted unanimously.**

#### VI. Election of Officers

The committee did not have to elect anyone insofar as it elected at a prior meeting Bishop Susan as President, Marco Austin, Esq. as Vice President and, at this meeting, named the Rev. Lee Alison Crawford as Secretary.

#### VII. Report from TEC

The TEC group presented three themes: the new presiding bishop, the changes of structure and elimination of the majority of Committees, Commission, Agencies and Boards (CCAB), including the Standing Commission on World Mission, and the three positions which had been eliminated (Alex Baumgarten, Sam McDonald y Stacy Sauls). Glenda spoke some about what had happened at The Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY.

#### VIII. Discussion about Task Force that will work on a revision of the covenant

The entire committee (IARCA and TEC) agreed that this is a good idea.

— Who will participate? Two from each panel.

— ¿What topoi will the committee discuss?

IARCA members  
Héctor y Julio

TEC members  
Lloyd y Susan

## Working Points

- Glossary/thesaurus
  - historical memory, something that brings us up to date
  - add a part that captures the journey
  - from where revelation is born [in terms of this context]
  - how we can share mission
  - what we have learned from our shared journey of 18 years to apply to the future
  - prepare a shared/common document
  - the role of women in the covenant, emphasis on women's ministry and how to support them
  - review finances, beginning with the current status
  - long-term work
- shared history even, the emotional spirit of the covenant in the preface

The document needs to speak about the formal part of the covenant and then the animating/spiritual/driving part and bring up-to-date the reality of the covenant. It needs to address the economic situation in the the United States as a point of entry.

The plan is to have a first draft by June 2016.

The TEC panel needs IARAC's master calendar — when are the respective diocesan conventions, women's group meetings, youth meetings, etc.

Next the committee discussed:

How do we modify the covenant?

What is the mechanism for revision? Does the committee present recommendations to the Executive Council of TEC? How far can this committee call for revision?

The group will meet via Skype on 13 April 2016 at 4.00 PM EDT.

## IX. Date of the Next Meeting:

**The next meeting will take place the last week of February 2019, 25 February, Travel Day, 26-27 February meeting; 28 February travel day. The group will convene in Honduras.**

## X. Other Matters

Chuck announced that his ordination to the diaconate (red stoles) will be 25 June 2016 at Skaneateles NY.

The group ended its meeting with Holy Eucharist celebrated by the Right Rev. Sturdie Down, Primate of IARCA.

The committee thanked the Diocese of Guatemala for all its efforts in preparing for this meeting and the care of the chaplain.

The meeting formally ended at 4.42 PM.

Respectfully submitted  
(the Rev. Canon) Lee Alison Crawford