

AN ANGLICAN COVENANT

*Comments on the St. Andrew's Draft Covenant submitted by the House of Bishops on behalf of the Church in the Province of the West Indies*

1. General

We commend the Covenant Design Group for the production of the St. Andrew's Draft and the Lambeth Commentary on the St. Andrew's Draft for an Anglican Covenant.

2. Answers to the Three Questions

*(1) Is the Province able to give an "in principle" commitment to the Covenant process at this time (without committing itself to the details of any text)?*

In our response to the Nassau Draft issued by the Covenant Design Group, our Provincial Synod gave its support, in principle, for an Anglican Covenant. In the light of that decision, the Church in the Province of the West Indies places itself in the company of those member churches who recognize the need for a mechanism that will hold us all mutually accountable. We believe that an Anglican Covenant would provide our Communion with the best way forward if we wish to maintain both Communion and Catholic identify. The Covenant is the only option if we wish to remain a communion rather than a federation of churches.

*(2) "Is it possible to give some indication of any Synodical process which would have to be undertaken to adopt the Covenant in the fullness of time?"*

The formal adoption of an Anglican Covenant requires the approval of the Provincial Synod which meets in regular session, every three years. The final Covenant text will be reviewed in the first instance. The Bishops will advise the Provincial Standing Committee for presentation to the Provincial Synod.

*(3) "In considering the St. Andrew's Draft for an Anglican Covenant, are there any elements which would need extensive change in order to make the process of synodical adoption viable?"*

There is only one issue which would need extensive change and that is the Appendix to the St. Andrew's Draft. We welcome the information provided in the Lambeth Commentary in respect of the Covenant Design Group's intention to replace the Appendix with a new section four. We fully support that approach.

In addition, we draw attention to the following issues which in our opinion, require further consideration:-

1. The Introduction

The St. Andrew's Draft offers an improvement on the Nassau Draft. In the light of the importance of the theological framework for our common affirmations and commitments, we feel that the Covenant Design Group should give some

consideration to the provision of a closer relationship between the Introduction and the propositions of the Covenant. The Lambeth Commentary states that the Covenant Design Group will publish the Introduction alongside the Covenant, but the Introduction does not carry the weight of the Covenant itself. Some consideration should be given to convert the Introduction to the Preamble.

2. Section One: Our Inheritance of Faith

While we welcome the overall content of this section, we are concerned over the mention of the historic formularies of the Church of England. These historic formularies are no longer in use in the Province of the West Indies.

Section Two: The Life we Share with Others: Our Anglican Vocation

There are two concerns related to this section:

- (a) A stronger affirmation of evangelism in mission.
- (b) The inclusion of worship in the 'marks' of mission.

Section Three: Our Unity and Common Life

We concur with the Windsor Continuation Group's report "There is currently a lack of clarity about the role of each of the Instruments and their relation to one another." We note that the Covenant Design Group in the Lambeth Commentary promised to revisit the following statistical data and comments from the bishops at Lambeth about the Instruments themselves."

Some concern was expressed over the use of "episcopally led and synodically governed." In our province, we have used "The Bishop in Synod" as a standard designation.

Conclusion

Our strong support for an Anglican Covenant flows from our love for our communion and the noble heritage God has entrusted to us. We believe that the final text should have the following characteristics:-

- Faithfulness to our Anglican heritage
- Clarity of expression
- Transparency in all its proposals
- Mutual accountability – mutual subjection
- Consequences following breach of covenant including 'diminished status' within the communion fellowship
- Promotion of trust between the member churches