

## **INITIAL RESPONSE BY THE PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA TO THE REPORT OF THE COVENANT DESIGN GROUP DATED 19 FEBRUARY 2007**

The Province of Australia welcomes the report of the Covenant Design Group and Draft Text for an Anglican Covenant.

The Province considers that in many respects the 2007 draft improves upon the draft appended to the Windsor Report. In particular, the Province sees the following elements of the 2007 draft as positive, and hopes that these elements will be retained in further drafts:

- A strong focus on the commitment to shared faith, ministry and mission.
- A pattern of “affirmations and commitments” shaping the draft, including reference to historic formularies.
- The deliberately non-innovative statements of shared faith.
- The philosophy that the role of a covenant is to make explicit something already meant and to articulate something already lived.
- The more missiological and ‘confessional’ focus, rather than a ‘structural/canonical’ one.
- The vesting of the instruments of communion with a guiding and moral role rather than a semi-judicial or executive authority.

There are some elements of the draft which the Province considers could benefit from further consideration. Some ambiguities in sections five and six of the draft need resolution: namely, the authority of the instruments of communion, the agreed limitations upon the autonomy of member churches, the processes to be adopted by member churches and instruments in the event of difference or dispute and any sanction for breaking the terms of the covenant.

The Province of Australia is committed to engaging in a ‘covenant consultation process’ in association with member churches. This ‘covenant consultation process’ will incorporate an education program and conversation and consultation about the proposed text.

Before embarking upon a detailed response to the 2007 draft it is worth making some observations about a peculiarity of the Anglican Church of Australia (ACA). Of all the member churches of the Communion, the ACA has the Constitution that most closely resembles the proposed Anglican Covenant. The ACA is, to some extent, a ‘Communion within a Communion’, being a federation of autonomous dioceses united by a Constitution. The Primate of the Anglican Church is in a position not unlike that of the Archbishop of Canterbury in that he holds little, if any, authority in a diocese other than that of which he is bishop. His authority in the national church is moral rather than jurisdictional and he leads by invitation rather than by direction. The Constitution of the ACA was developed over a long period and has been reasonably successful in holding together a large group of autonomous bodies in which a wide range of theological

viewpoints are held and expressed. It was for this reason that the draft covenant offered by the ACA in 2006 drew upon the ACA's Constitution.

There are a number of consequences of this peculiarity. First, it may be that there are features of the ACA's Constitution that could be helpful to the development of a text for an Anglican Covenant. The second point is of more domestic concern within the ACA. In order for the ACA to adopt an Anglican Covenant, the support of all or a substantial majority of dioceses will need to be won. This will not be an easy task. Support is more likely to be forthcoming if it can be demonstrated that the Anglican Covenant contains nothing different from or additional to what dioceses have already embraced in their adoption of the Constitution. For that reason there will be references below to the ACA Constitution and its contents.

### **The 2007 Draft**

The Province of Australia makes the following responses to the text of the 2007 draft. For ease of reference the text of the draft is followed by comment and a recommended amended text, with changes highlighted.

#### 1. Preamble

*(Psalm 127.1-2, Ezekiel 37.1-14, Mark 1.1, John 10.10; Romans 5.1-5, Ephesians 4:1-16, Revelation 2-3)*

We, the Churches of the Anglican Communion, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, solemnly covenant together in these articles, in order to proclaim more effectively in our different contexts the Grace of God revealed in the Gospel, to offer God's love in responding to the needs of the world, to maintain the unity in the Spirit in the bond of peace, and to grow up together as a worldwide Communion to the full stature of Christ.

#### Comment

It is not clear from the Design Group's Report whether the section headed 'An Introduction to a Draft Text for an Anglican Covenant' is to be considered part of the covenant. There is material in that section that could usefully be included. Perhaps there is a need for a background report or explanatory memorandum. In addition to the material in the current 'Introduction' the Province of Australia recommends that some material be included about biblical tradition informing the term 'covenant', about how it is intended that the term 'covenant' is to be understood in relation to this document and about the extent to which the biblical tradition is to be imported into our understanding of this covenant document. Such discussion could be incorporated into the preamble or into a background report or explanatory memorandum.

By way of suggestion we include the following formulation which has been developed over time by the National Council of Churches Australia and which appears in its Covenanting Document:

### **Biblical Basis of Covenant**

The motif of covenanting permeates the story of the people of God in the Judeo-Christian tradition. God covenants with people, and people make covenants with each other, under God's oversight. The idea of a covenant implies a significant commitment. It is a reliable and lasting relationship, which includes both promises and obligations. Biblically, the relationship is usually sealed with a ritual action.

The covenants God makes with the people stem from the sovereign, gracious, free initiative of God, and have their basis in this God, who is holy, righteous and extravagantly merciful. One style of covenant includes those made with Noah, signifying God's everlasting promise to the whole creation, and with Abraham and David, which emphasise God's promises to individuals, and through them to the whole people of God. Another style of covenant is that made with Moses and the people of the Exodus. Here, the stress is on God's merciful delivery of oppressed peoples and, in turn, on the obligations that flow to the people as a result of the covenant. The Bible witnesses not only to the need for obedience on the part of the people, but also to the possibility of the covenant being threatened when the people fail to live up to its obligations.

A highly significant development arose with the prophets who, aware of the people's failure to live up to the covenant, restlessly began to seek and hope for a different and better covenant, a true faithfulness. Jeremiah discerned God's purpose to establish a new covenant, written on the heart, in which everyone, being forgiven, would know God and walk with God in a relationship of responsible faithfulness.

Covenants between people are seen as being under God's oversight, or enacted in the sight of God. But they follow different patterns. There are covenants between equal nations, between conquering kings and their subject kings, between a king and his people, and between two individuals.

This web of understandings of covenant, which is woven through the Old Testament, is developed in the New Testament, where the covenant imagery persists. The most significant way that this theological motif is taken up is the understanding that Jesus embodies a 'new covenant', seals it through his life, death and resurrection, and signifies it in his Last Supper, calling people to a radical change of mind and style of living.

The old covenant is fulfilled in the new. The new covenant is opened to all; it is made accessible through the action of the Spirit, who draws the covenanted people into communion (*koinonia*). They are thus rightly seen as a covenanting community.

## **Implications of Covenant**

A biblical theology of covenant enables an ecclesiology of covenanting. We make covenant with one another in grateful response to God's initiative in making covenant with us.

The covenant theme thus has important implications for the church: it offers an alternative understanding of how things are and how things could be. Because of the divine initiative and because God is totally committed to all humankind, a new beginning is possible for the church and for the whole human community.

Therefore, the covenant requires a constant, solid commitment in the circumstances of life. Within the one faith community – the Body of Christ - there is a mutual responsibility and solidarity with one another for the fulfilment of this commitment.

In relation to the Preamble itself we have three comments. The first is a general one, that the use of Biblical references throughout the 2007 draft is not especially helpful. It is not clear to us why the references are there and what function they are intended to serve. Perhaps if there were to be a more comprehensive background document prepared the Biblical references could be included in that document, along with explanation of the themes highlighted by those portions of Scripture and how those themes speak to and inform the covenant text.

Secondly, we recommend that the word “up” in the last full line of the preamble be deleted. Its inclusion has struck some in Australia as condescending.

Thirdly, we consider that the opening words of the preamble give rise to some ambiguities about the impact of adoption of the covenant and membership of the Communion. As currently phrased the words tend to imply that a church becomes a member of the Anglican Communion by adoption of the covenant. Perhaps this could be overcome by replacing the opening words with the words “We, as Churches of the Anglican Communion, under the Lordship ...”.

## **1 Preamble**

[ ]

**We, as** Churches of the Anglican Communion, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, solemnly covenant together in these articles, in order to proclaim more effectively in our different contexts the Grace of God revealed in the Gospel, to offer God's love in responding to the needs of the world, to maintain the unity in the Spirit in the bond of peace, and to grow [ ] together as a worldwide Communion to the full stature of Christ.

## **2. Section 2**

**Each member Church, and the Communion as a whole, affirms:**

1. that it is part of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
2. that it professes the faith which is uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures as containing all things necessary for salvation and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith, and which is set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation;
3. that it holds and duly administers the two sacraments ordained by Christ himself – Baptism and the Supper of the Lord – ministered with the unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and of the elements ordained by him;
4. that it participates in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God;
5. that, led by the Holy Spirit, it has borne witness to Christian truth in its historic formularies, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons [1];
6. our loyalty to this inheritance of faith as our inspiration and guidance under God in bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and making Him known to our societies and nations.

First, we suggest that the opening words of the section be amended to delete the words “and the Communion as a whole”. Each national church, in adopting the covenant, can affirm only for itself.

Secondly, we suggest that the points listed in Section 2 be amended to reflect the content and ordering of the Lambeth Quadrilateral more transparently. It will be easier to win support for the covenant, especially in Australia, if it is clearly adding nothing new, and also clear in including what is already authoritative. After point three there should be a further dot point inserted, such as the following: “that it receives the Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church.” It would be helpful if express reference were made, by foot-note or in some other way, to the Lambeth Quadrilateral and the connection between it and the text of this section.

Thirdly, we note in reference to 2.5 (and footnote 1) that not all Anglican Provinces share the same foundational relationship with the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion and the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. Footnote 1 is no doubt intended to address this diversity. We commend the following observation by Steven Sykes in this regard:

'The Book of Common Prayer, the Thirty-Nine Articles, and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons...constitute what in the Church of England is spoken of as its "inheritance of faith" [see Canon C. 15]...insofar as they define the faith inheritance of the See of Canterbury, and insofar as communion with that See defines what it means to be to belong to the Anglican Communion, these documents have significant authority among Anglicans throughout the world.'

Stephen Sykes, 'The Anglican Character' in Ian Bunting, ed. /Celebrating the Anglican Way/, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1996, pp. 21-32, p. 23.

**Each member Church [ ] affirms:**

1. that it is part of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
2. that it professes the faith which is uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures as containing all things necessary for salvation and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith, and which is set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation;
3. that it holds and duly administers the two sacraments ordained by Christ himself – Baptism and the Supper of the Lord – ministered with the unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and of the elements ordained by him;
4. that it receives the Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church;
5. that it participates in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God;
6. that, led by the Holy Spirit, it has borne witness to Christian truth in its historic formularies, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons [1];
7. our loyalty to this inheritance of faith as our inspiration and guidance under God in bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and making Him known to our societies and nations.

### 3. Section 3

- 3.3 ensure that biblical texts are handled faithfully, respectfully, comprehensively and coherently, primarily through the teaching and initiative of bishops and synods, and building on our best scholarship, believing that scriptural revelation must continue to illuminate, challenge and transform cultures, structures and ways of thinking;
- 3.4 nurture and respond ...
- 3.5 pursue a common pilgrimage with other members of the Communion to discern truth, that peoples from all nations may truly be free and receive the new and abundant life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We suggest that in 3.3 the words “primarily through the teaching and initiative” be replaced with “acknowledging the teaching responsibility” and that the words “the deliberations of” be inserted between “bishops and” and “synods”. The primacy of bishops and synods in the handling of biblical texts was questioned in feedback received by the authors of this response.

We suggest that 3.5 be amended to read as follows: “seek to discern truth, with other members of the Communion, that peoples from all nations may receive the new and abundant life in the Lord Just Christ and truly be free.”

- 3.3 ensure that biblical texts are handled faithfully, respectfully, comprehensively and coherently, **acknowledging the teaching responsibility of bishops and the deliberations of synods**, and building on our best scholarship, believing that scriptural revelation must continue to illuminate, challenge and transform cultures, structures and ways of thinking;
- 3.4 nurture and respond ...
- 3.5 [ ] seek to discern truth, **with other members of the Communion**, that peoples from all nations may [ ] receive the new and abundant life in the Lord Jesus Christ **and truly be free**.

#### 4. Section 4

**We affirm** that Communion is a gift of God: that His people from east and west, north and south, may together declare his glory and be a sign of God's Kingdom. We gratefully acknowledge God's gracious providence extended to us down the ages, our origins in the undivided Church, the rich history of the Church in the British Isles shaped particularly by the Reformation, and our growth into a global communion through the various mission initiatives.

As the Communion continues ...

The member Churches acknowledge ...

**We commit** ourselves to ...

In this mission, which is the Mission of Christ, **we commit ourselves**

1. to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God
2. to teach, baptize and nurture new believers;
3. to respond to human need by loving service;
4. to seek to transform unjust structures of society; and
5. to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain and renew the life of the earth.

In the first paragraph of Section 4 we suggest that the word "particularly" be omitted.

In the final section we submit that the reference to The Marks of Mission of the Worldwide Anglican Communion be closer to the text of the Australian draft covenant, which uses a form of words more closely reflecting the 2005 reworking of the Marks of Mission by the Anglican Consultative Council.

**We affirm** that Communion is a gift of God: that His people from east and west, north and south, may together declare his glory and be a sign of God's Kingdom. We gratefully acknowledge God's gracious providence extended to us down the ages, our origins in the undivided Church, the rich history of the Church in the British Isles shaped [ ] by the Reformation, and our growth into a global communion through the various mission initiatives.

As the Communion continues ...

The member Churches acknowledge ...

**The member Churches affirm that they enter into this covenant in order that their common mission might thereby be enriched and magnified to the Glory of God. The Mission of the Church, which is the Mission of Christ, is to proclaim the good news of The Kingdom of God, and in particular to:**

- **teach, baptize and nurture new believers;**
- **respond to human need by loving service;**
- **seek to transform unjust structures of society;**

- **strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth;**
- **worship and celebrate the grace of God; and**
- **live as one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.**

## 5. Section 5

**We affirm** the historic episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of his Church and the central role of bishops as custodians of faith, leaders in mission, and as visible sign of unity.

**We affirm** the place of four Instruments of Communion which serve to discern our common mind in communion issues, and to foster our interdependence and mutual accountability in Christ. While each member Church orders and regulates its own affairs through its own system of government and law and is therefore described as autonomous, each church recognises that the member churches of the Anglican Communion are bound together, not juridically by a central legislative or executive authority, but by the Holy Spirit who calls and enables us to live in mutual loyalty and service.

Of these four Instruments of Communion ...

The Lambeth Conference, ...

The Primates' Meeting, ...

The Anglican Consultative Council is a body representative of bishops, clergy and laity of the churches, which co-ordinates aspects of international Anglican ecumenical and mission work.

In the first paragraph the words between “the historic episcopate” in the first line and “Church” in the second could be deleted if those words are used in Section 2 as suggested above. In addition, we suggest that the word “custodians” be replaced with the words “guardians and teachers”, that the word “the” be inserted before the word “faith” and the word “sign” in the last line should be a plural.

In the second paragraph we suggest that the first sentence be amended to read as follows: “We affirm the value of the four Instruments of Communion within Anglicanism, which foster our interdependence and mutual accountability in Christ and assist member Churches in discerning a common mind.”

In the final paragraph, it would be helpful if a comma were inserted between “Anglican” and “ecumenical”.

**We affirm [ ]** the central role of bishops as **[ ] guardians and teachers** of the faith, leaders in mission, and as visible signs of unity.

**We affirm** the **[ ] value** of the four Instruments of Communion **within Anglicanism**, which **[ ]** foster our interdependence and mutual accountability in Christ **and assist member Churches in discerning a common mind**. While each member Church orders and regulates its own affairs through its own system of government and law and is therefore described as autonomous, each church recognises that the member churches of the Anglican Communion are bound together, not juridically by a central legislative or executive authority, but by the Holy Spirit who calls and enables us to live in mutual loyalty and service.

Of these four Instruments of Communion ...

The Lambeth Conference, ...

The Primates' Meeting, ...

The Anglican Consultative Council is a body representative of bishops, clergy and laity of the churches, which co-ordinates aspects of international Anglican, ecumenical and mission work.

## **6. Section 6**

### **Each Church commits itself**

1. in essential matters of common concern, to have regard to the common good of the Communion in the exercise of its autonomy, and to support the work of the Instruments of Communion with the spiritual and material resources available to it.
2. to spend time with openness and patience in matters of theological debate and discernment to listen and to study with one another in order to comprehend the will of God. Such study and debate is an essential feature of the life of the Church as it seeks to be led by the Spirit into all truth and to proclaim the Gospel afresh in each generation. Some issues, which are perceived as controversial or new when they arise, may well evoke a deeper understanding of the implications of God's revelation to us; others may prove to be distractions or even obstacles to the faith: all therefore need to be tested by shared discernment in the life of the Church.
3. to seek with other members, through the Church's shared councils, a common mind about matters of essential concern, consistent with the Scriptures, common standards of faith, and the canon law of our churches.
4. to heed the counsel of our Instruments of Communion in matters which threaten the unity of the Communion and the effectiveness of our mission. While the Instruments of Communion have no juridical or executive authority in our Provinces, we recognise them as those bodies by which our common life in Christ is articulated and sustained, and which therefore carry a moral authority which commands our respect.
5. to seek the guidance of the Instruments of Communion, where there are matters in serious dispute among churches that cannot be resolved by mutual admonition and counsel:
  1. by submitting the matter to the Primates Meeting
  2. if the Primates believe that the matter is not one for which a common mind has been articulated, they will seek it with the other instruments and their councils
  3. finally, on this basis, the Primates will offer guidance and direction.
6. We acknowledge that in the most extreme circumstances, where member churches choose not to fulfil the substance of the covenant as understood by the Councils of the Instruments of Communion, we will consider that such churches will have relinquished for themselves the force and meaning of the covenant's purpose, and a process of restoration and renewal will be required to re-establish their covenant relationship with other member churches.

In 6.2 everything after the first sentence is commentary and would be more appropriate in an explanatory document than in the text of the covenant itself.

In 6.3 the words “and with ecumenical consultation” could be inserted after “shared councils”. We suggest that the reference to canon law at the end of the paragraph be deleted.

In addition to these rather minor suggestions, there are some more significant comments that we would like to make about Section 6. These comments will of necessity also have implications for the drafting of section 5.

The essence of our concern is that neither Section 5 nor 6 deals clearly and unambiguously with questions about the tension between the autonomy of the member Churches, on the one hand, and the authority of the Instruments of Communion, on the other. Use of language such as “heed” in 6.4 unfortunately only creates an ambiguity which seems to give rise to a necessary implication that the Instruments are to be understood to have some degree of juridical or executive authority which goes beyond the power to advise and the authority to invite. If “heed” means to “listen to and consider”, then it is unproblematic. However if, as appears open, the word “heed” can be understood to mean “abide by”, then this necessary implication is present. Paragraph 6.6, which appears to give the Instruments the authority to interpret the covenant in the light of conduct by member Churches, serves to support the implication.

There may be a number of forms of words which may be helpful. Of those, the phrase “polity of persuasion” may be a useful starting point.

The 2007 draft does not use the language of ‘reception’, ‘adiaphora’, ‘provisionality’ and ‘subsidiarity’ and perhaps it is helpful that it does not do so. Nevertheless, some way must be found of enunciating the substance of those principles in clear, unambiguous language. An Anglican Covenant must be clear about what it means for a member Church to be “autonomous” and the degree to which a member Church, by adopting the covenant, agrees to self-limit that autonomy and in what circumstances that limitation will be exercised.

Under the Australian draft covenant, member Churches expressly accept that there will be constraints upon their autonomy and upon the principle of subsidiarity and agree, as mutual gift, to limit the exercise of their autonomy “where to do so is in the interests of the Communion.”

An Anglican Covenant requires some express statement, on the part of signatories, of preparedness to self-limit, and guidance about the kind of situations in which such self-limitation would be exercised.

Similarly, an Anglican Covenant should use language which makes it clear that the authority of the Instruments of Communion is moral and advisory only and not semi-judicial or executive.

One of three papers produced at the September 2006 meeting of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, ‘Responding to a proposal of a covenant’

addresses these issues in a helpful way. In speaking about these issues it says: “In discerning whether a conflict should be addressed at the local level, the universal level, or at some level in-between, the three criteria of ‘intensity, extent and substance’, as proposed in our report of 2003 commend themselves. If a conflict has become intense, it is less likely to be resolved easily at the local level; if its scope is extensive, involving many people in multiple locations, a universal solution is probably required; if the matter is substantial rather than trivial or peripheral, a larger structural resolution seems indicated.”

These three criteria of “intensity, extent and substance” may be a clear guide and useful in the context of an Anglican Covenant as a pointer to situations in which a member Church should recognize that an exercise of self-limitation is called for. In circumstances in which these three criteria lead a member Church to discern that it should self-limit in respect to a proposed innovation, a covenant should require that that member Church refrain from pursuing that innovation *unless* what amounts to a process of reception determines that there is no bar to the proposed innovation. The word “unless” is used in this context because it does not carry any implication that a process of reception will necessarily be successful (unlike the word “until” as it appears in the Windsor Report).

An Anglican Covenant must also be clear about what would amount to a process of reception and how such a process may be initiated. We suggest that a member Church should, in an appropriate situation (discerned in line with the above criteria) agree to refrain from pursuing an innovation *unless* at least two of the Instruments of Communion (including the ACC) advise it that there is no bar to the proposed innovation.

We recommend that one of the two Instruments should be the ACC because it is more representative than the other corporate instruments to the extent that it includes significant numbers of women and lay persons amongst its members.

The 2007 draft appears, at first sight, to give undue weight to the view of the Primates Meeting in these matters. However, on reflection it is apparent that the draft merely appoints the Primates Meeting as a “filter” between member Churches and the other instruments. This function is appropriate as the Primates meet more regularly than the other corporate instruments, and so long as it is clear from the text that the view of the Primates Meeting is to hold no greater weight than those of the ACC or the Lambeth Conference, then the mechanism expressed in 6.5 is appropriate. However in 6.5.3 we suggest that the words “guidance and direction” are replaced with the words “advice and guidance”.

Paragraph 6.6 requires substantial re-working, we suggest, for similar reasons. It should be clear that the only sanction available against a member Church is one which that a member Church chooses to apply against itself. The appropriate sanction is withdrawal from the Communion or withdrawal from Communion activities and it should be entirely voluntary. The text of a covenant should make the voluntary nature of that sanction clear, and should avoid the implication, arguably present in the current draft, that it is within the authority or power of one or more of the instruments to determine either that

withdrawal is warranted, or that a member Church has exercised the sanction of withdrawal in respect of itself.

There should be just one exception to the general principle that the Instruments have no authority to apply a sanction to a member Church. The moral authority of the Instruments of Communion encompasses an authority to issue invitations, for example, to attend meetings. It is inherent in this authority that the Instruments may also decline to issue invitations.

## **6 Each Church commits itself**

1. in essential matters of common concern, to have regard to the common good of the Communion in the exercise of its autonomy, and to support the work of the Instruments of Communion with the spiritual and material resources available to it;
2. to spend time with openness and patience in matters of theological debate and discernment to listen and to study with one another in order to comprehend the will of God [ ];
3. to seek with other members, through the Church's shared councils **and with ecumenical consultation**, a common mind about matters of essential concern, consistent with the Scriptures and common standards of faith **and discipline** [ ];
4. **voluntarily to self-limit the exercise of its autonomy in relation to actions which it [or the Communion] considers may threaten the unity of the Communion or the effectiveness of the Communion's mission because of the intensity, extent and substance of disagreement about those actions;**
5. **in a situation in which it considers that a voluntary self-limitation of its authority is warranted**, to seek the guidance of the Instruments of Communion **by initiating the following process:**
  1. **the member church submits a proposal about a matter to the Primates Meeting;**
  2. **if the Primates believe the matter is not one for which a common mind has been articulated, they refer the proposal to the other instruments and their councils for advice and guidance; and**
  3. **the Primates Meeting reports the responses of the other instruments and their councils, together with its own response to the proposal, if it so chooses, to the member church;**
6. **where the guidance of the Instruments of Communion has been sought by means of the process described in 6.5, to refrain from**

taking the proposed action unless the responses of at least two of the instruments, including that of the Anglican Consultative Council, indicate that there is no bar to the proposal; and

7. to acknowledge that in the most extreme circumstances, **where it has chosen** not to fulfil the substance of the covenant, **it will have relinquished for itself, or may be understood by other member churches to have relinquished**, the force and meaning of the covenant's purpose, **and that** a process of restoration and renewal will be required to re-establish **the** covenant relationship with other member churches.