

Church of England Response
to the draft Anglican Covenant

(I) Comments on the text of the draft covenant

In this section of the paper the original text from the Covenant Design Group is in Times New Roman and the comments from the Church of England follow in Arial.

An Anglican Covenant - A Draft for Discussion

An Introduction to a Draft Text for an Anglican Covenant

God has called us into communion in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Jn. 1:3). This call is established in God's purposes for creation (Eph. 1:10; 3:9ff.), which have been furthered in God's covenants with Israel and its representatives such as Abraham and most fully in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ Jesus. We humbly recognize that this calling and gift of communion grants us responsibilities for our common life before God.

Through God's grace we have been given the Communion of Anglican churches through which to respond to God's larger calling in Christ (Acts 2:42). This Communion provides us with a special charism and identity among the many followers and servants of Jesus. Recognizing the wonder, beauty and challenge of maintaining communion in this family of churches, and the need for mutual commitment and discipline as a witness to God's promise in a world and time of instability, conflict, and fragmentation, we covenant together as churches of this Anglican Communion to be faithful to God's promises through the historic faith we confess, the way we live together and the focus of our mission.

Our faith embodies a coherent testimony to what we have received from God's Word and the Church's long-standing witness; our life together reflects the blessings of God in growing our Communion into a truly global body; and the mission we pursue aims at serving the great promises of God in Christ that embrace the world and its peoples, carried out in shared responsibility and stewardship of resources, and in interdependence among ourselves and with the wider Church.

Our prayer is that God will redeem our struggles and weakness, and renew and enrich our common life so that the Anglican Communion may be used to witness effectively in all the world to the new life and hope found in Christ

Comment

(1) This introduction was in the original report from the Covenant Design Group, but was omitted from the revised version of the Covenant that was

issued in April 2007. It is important that a revised version of this introduction should be included with the Covenant since this would provide theological context for the Covenant itself.

(2) The introduction needs to begin with affirming the Trinitarian basis of communion and helpful material is provided for this purpose by the report of the International Anglican-Orthodox dialogue *The Church of the Triune God*. This declares:

‘This life is revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us – we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:2-3).

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit’ (1 John 4:13).

What is the life revealed to us? St John makes it clear that the fellowship or communion (*koinonia*) of life in the Church reflects the communion that is the divine life itself, the life of the Trinity. This is not the revelation of a reality remote from us, for in the communion of the Church we share in the divine life.

The communion manifested in the life of the Church has the Trinitarian fellowship as its basis, model and ultimate goal. Conversely, the communion of the Persons of the Holy Trinity creates, structures and expounds the mystery of the communion experienced in the Church. It is within the and by the Church that we come to know the Trinity and by the Trinity we come to understand the Church because ‘the Church is full of Trinity.’ (*The Church of The Triune God* Paras 1-3)

(3) The introduction also needs to root discussion of the Anglican Covenant in the biblical material and this is something that is done in a helpful fashion in the Introduction to a missiological reworking of the draft Anglican Covenant by Canon Tim Dakin and Dr Martin Davie which states:

In seeking communion with humankind, despite our rebellion and sin, the Holy Scriptures tell us that God made covenants with Noah, Abraham, Israel and David. His aim was to bless all nations as they responded to his invitation to live in communion with him, so that he might restore his image in them.

In Jesus there is now another covenant: “this is my blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt 26:28). In this covenant we find a renewed communion with God as we share with others the forgiveness of sins through Jesus. We discover our communion with others in mission through Christ, and our mission is to spread the communion of Christ, ultimately with the whole of creation.

(4) In its present form the introduction makes a problematic jump from God's purpose in creation to the Anglican Communion. New material needs to be added between the current first and second paragraphs that talks about the universal Church and the vocation that Christians have to grow together into that unity which God desires for His people as a foretaste of the future unity of the all things in Christ. The material on the Anglican Communion would need to be re-written to refer back to this new material.

One way of providing this new material would be to draw on what is said about the calling of the Church in paragraph 2 of the *Windsor Report*. This material from the *Windsor Report* could be added in what would become the sixth paragraph of the Introduction as follows:

Those who are in communion with God through Jesus Christ form one universal Church which is called to be: 'through the work of the Spirit, an anticipatory sign of God's healing and restorative future for the world. Those who, despite their own sinfulness, are saved by grace through their faith in God's gospel (Eph. 2:1-10) are to live as a united family across traditional ethnic and other boundaries (2:11-12), and so are to reveal the many-splendoured wisdom of the one true God to the hostile and divisive powers of the world (3:9-10) as they explore and celebrate the astonishing breadth of God's love made known through Christ's dwelling in their hearts (3:14-21). The redeemed unity which is God's will for the whole creation is to be lived out within the life of the Church as, through its various God-given ministries, it is built up as the Body of Christ and grows to maturity not least through speaking the truth in love (1:10, 22-23; 4:1-16).'

The seventh paragraph of the Introduction could then be changed to read something along the following lines:

In the providence of God, which operates in spite of the divisions caused by sin, various families of churches have grown up within the universal Church during the course of its history. Among these families is the Anglican Communion, which provides us our special charism and identity....

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 of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and to grow up together as a worldwide Communion to the full stature of Christ.

Comment

(5) An important question that is raised by this Preamble is what is meant by the phrase ‘the Churches of the Anglican Communion.’ Are the churches of the Anglican communion, properly so called, the thirty eight national bodies that belong to the Communion or are they the dioceses of the Communion gathered round their diocesan bishops? This is not just a theoretical ecclesiological question, but also a practical one since it raises the question of whether the bodies that should subscribe to the Covenant are the national bodies or the dioceses. This issue does not require a revision of the text, but it is something that needs to be addressed.

(6) The biblical texts currently at the beginning of each section of the Covenant should be omitted. They suggest a way of handling the biblical material that not all Anglicans share and it is not always clear how the texts relate to the material that follows. It would be better for biblical references to be integrated into the body of the text as in the case of the IATDC report on the Covenant.

(7) The word ‘solemnly’ does not add anything and should also be omitted

(8) The final clause of this Preamble is problematic because it seems to identify the churches of the Anglican Communion with the universal Church. It is only along with the Church as whole that the churches of the Anglican Communion will attain the ‘stature of the fullness of Christ’ (Eph 4:13). The clause therefore needs to be re-phrased so that it says: ‘...and to grow up to, together with all God’s people, to the full stature of Christ.’

2 The Life We Share: Common Catholicity, Apostolicity and Confession of Faith
(*Deuteronomy 6.4-7, Leviticus 19.9-10, Amos 5.14-15, 24; Matthew 25, 28.16-20, 1 Corinthians 15.3-11, Philippians 2.1-11, 1 Timothy 3:15-16, Hebrews 13.1-17*)

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 [1];

(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 [2], and which is set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation [3];

(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];

(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 [5];

(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 [6].

¹ Cf. The Preface to the Declaration of Assent, Canon C15 of the Church of England.

² Cf. The Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1888

³ Cf. The Preface to the Declaration of Assent, Canon C15 of the Church of England.

⁴ cf. The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1886/1888, The Preface to the Declaration of Assent, Canon C15 of the Church of England.

⁵ This is not meant to exclude other Books of Common Prayer and Ordinals duly authorised for use throughout the Anglican Communion, but acknowledges the foundational nature of the Book of Common Prayer 1662 in the life of the Communion.

⁶ Cf. The Preface to the Declaration of Assent, Canon C15 of the Church of England.

Comment

(9) In its present form this section of the Covenant has the problem of churches making affirmations about themselves. It also suggests that the Catholic Church is divided into a number of different parts, each of which is less than the whole, whereas in fact the Catholic Church is present in its fullness in each individual church, albeit in relationship with all the other local churches.

These difficulties would be avoided if the section were to be re-cast using the established ecumenical formula of mutual recognition. The section would then be about each church of the Anglican Communion recognising the presence of the Catholic Church in all the others. To make the style consistent with the Preamble the beginning of the section should use the first person plural.

(10) The language of subsection 2 is muddled because material from the Lambeth Quadrilateral has been combined with material from Article VI of the Thirty Nine Articles.

(11) Subsection 3 suggests that there are only two sacraments that were ordained by Christ. Although some Anglicans hold this position others do not and it would be better to avoid language that would provoke argument about this issue.

(12) Subsection 5 seems to suggest that every church has made use of the historic formularies, whereas in fact this has not been the case. Reference to the Thirty Nine Articles can also be seen to suggest a 'maximalist' approach

to doctrinal agreement whereas arguably the Covenant requires a more 'minimalist' approach. On the other hand, having a reference to the formularies is important to many Anglicans who see them as a guarantee of fidelity to orthodox biblical theology. A way forward might be to use the language of the Church of England's Declaration of Assent and to talk about 'the faith to which the formularies bear witness.'

(13) In order to reflect the points just made, the section could be re-written along the following lines:

We recognise in one another:

(1) The one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and participating in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God;

(2) Profession of the faith that is uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures (which contain all things necessary for salvation and are the rule and ultimate standard of faith), which is set forth in the catholic creeds, and to which the historic Anglican formularies bear witness;

(3) Loyalty to this inheritance of faith as their inspiration and guidance under God in bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and making Him known to their societies and nations;

(4) Due administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord ordained by Christ himself, ministered with the unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and of the elements ordained by him.

3 Our Commitment to Confession of the Faith

(Deuteronomy 30.11-14, Psalm 126, Mark 10.26-27, Luke 1.37, 46-55, John 8: 32, 14:15-17, 1 Corinthians 11.23-26, 2 Timothy 3:10-4:5;)

In seeking to be faithful to God in their various contexts, each Church commits itself to:

(1) uphold and act in continuity and consistency with the catholic and apostolic faith, order and tradition, biblically derived moral values and the vision of humanity received by and developed in the communion of member Churches;

(2) seek in all things to uphold the solemn obligation to sustain Eucharistic communion, welcoming members of all other member churches to join in its own celebration, and encouraging its members to participate in the Eucharist in a member church in accordance with the canonical discipline of that host church;

(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 the best scholarship, believing that scriptural revelation must continue to illuminate, challenge and transform cultures, structures and ways of thinking;

(4) nurture and respond to prophetic and faithful leadership and ministry to assist our Churches as courageous witnesses to the transformative power of the Gospel in the world.

(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.

Comment

(14) As before, the section should start with the second person plural: 'We commit ourselves to...'

(15) The Covenant needs to contain a reference to ethics. However, the reference in subsection 1 to 'biblically derived moral values' assumes a deductive approach to the relationship between Christian ethics and the Bible to which many Anglicans would not subscribe. In addition, something needs to be said about the renewal of humanity and the whole created order in Christ as the context for Christian ethics and there should to be a reference to 'holiness' as a comprehensive term for the way of life that God enables and requires.

A helpful approach would be finish subsection 1 after the word 'tradition' and to then insert a new subsection 2 along the following lines:

Uphold and proclaim a pattern of Christian moral reasoning and discipline that is rooted in, and answerable to, the teaching of Holy Scripture and the Catholic tradition, and that reflects the renewal of humanity and the whole created order through the death and resurrection of Christ and the holiness that in consequence God gives to, and requires from, His people.

(16) In subsection 3 it would be better to replace the redundant word 'solemn' with the term 'Christian' to make it clear that the obligation to sustain Eucharistic communion is something that is incumbent upon us because we are Christians.

4 The Life We Share with Others: Our Anglican Vocation

(Jeremiah 31.31-34, Ezekiel. 36.22-28, Matthew 28.16-20, John 17.20-24, 2 Corinthians 8-9, Ephesians 2:11-3:21, James 1.22-27)

(1) 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 Britain and Ireland shaped particularly by the Reformation, and our growth into a global communion through the various mission initiatives.

(2) As the Communion continues to develop into a worldwide family of interdependent churches, we also face challenges and opportunities for mission at local, regional, and international levels. We cherish our faith and mission heritage as offering us unique opportunities for mission collaboration, for discovery of the life of the whole gospel and for reconciliation and shared mission with the Church throughout the world.

(3) The member Churches acknowledge that their common mission is a mission shared with other churches and traditions not party to this covenant. It is with all the saints that we will comprehend the fuller dimensions of Christ's redemptive and immeasurable love.

(4) We commit ourselves to answering God's call to share in his healing and reconciling mission for our blessed but broken and hurting world, and, with mutual accountability, to share our God-given spiritual and material resources in this task.

(5) In this mission, which is the Mission of Christ [7], **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.

⁷ Cf. The five Marks of Mission as set out in the MISSIO Report of 1999, building on work at ACC-6 and ACC-8.

Comment

(17) The term 'undivided Church' in subsection 1 is problematic because it is not clear which particular period in the history of the Church is meant. It would be better to talk about the 'the Church of the Apostles and 'the ancient common traditions.'

(18) 'The missionary work of the Church' would be preferable to the words 'the various mission initiatives' in the present text.

(19) The second sentence of subsection 2 could be expressed more clearly and with a greater eschatological emphasis as follows:

We cherish the fact that our faith and mission heritage offers us unique opportunities for discovery of the life that the whole gospel offers and for reconciliation and collaboration in mission with the Church throughout the world as we seek to bear witness to the transforming power of God's coming kingdom.

(20) Subsection 3 needs to be put into the first person plural ('we acknowledge'). In addition, the words 'not party to this covenant' in this

subsection are unfortunate in that they define other Christian churches in purely negative terms. They should therefore be omitted, as should the redundant words 'a mission' that precede them.

It would also strengthen the text if the word 'only' were inserted before the words 'with all the saints in the last sentence of the subsection.

(21) The reference to the Five Marks of Mission in subsection 5 should be included in the main text and in (5) 2 the word 'new' should be left out since it is not only new believers who need nurturing.

5 Our Unity and Common Life

(Numbers 11.16-20, Luke 22.14-27, Acts 2.43-47, 4.32-35, 1 Corinthians 11.23-26, 1 Peter 4:7-11, 5:1-11)

(1) 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 [8] and the central role of bishops as custodians of faith, leaders in mission, and as a visible sign of unity.

(2) 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.

I. Of these four Instruments of Communion, the Archbishop of Canterbury, with whose See Anglicans have historically been in communion, is accorded a primacy of honour and respect as first amongst equals (*primus inter pares*). He calls the Lambeth Conference, and Primates' Meeting, and is President of the Anglican Consultative Council.

II. The Lambeth Conference, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, expressing episcopal collegiality worldwide, gathers the bishops for common counsel, consultation and encouragement and serves as an instrument in guarding the faith and unity of the Communion.

III. The Primates' Meeting, presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury, assembles for mutual support and counsel, monitors global developments and works in full collaboration in doctrinal, moral and pastoral matters that have Communion-wide implications.

IV. 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.

⁸ Cf. The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1886/1888

Comment

(22) This section needs to begin with an additional subsection that affirms the importance of the structures of the Anglican Communion along the following lines: 'We affirm the importance of the structures of the Anglican Communion in assisting in the discernment, articulation and exercise of our shared faith and common mission.' It would also read better if the words 'we affirm' were then omitted from the subsequent paragraphs.

(23) Since it deals with two subjects, the present subsection 1 should be divided into two subsections. In the first subsection there should be a reference to the personal, collegial and communal character of episcopal ministry and in the second it should be made clear that bishops exercise their ministry 'within the whole Church' and not apart from it. It would also be better to describe bishops as 'guardians' rather than 'custodians' of the faith. 'Custodians' brings to mind museums and art galleries and suggests a focus on the maintenance of the past.

The new subsections would then run as follows:

(2) [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 exercised in a personal, collegial and communal manner.

(3) The ministry of bishops within the whole Church as guardians of faith, leaders in mission, and as a visible sign of unity.

(24) The first paragraph of subsection 2 is rather long and should be divided into two subsections. In addition, the description of the four Instruments of Communion sits uneasily with the affirmations that precede it. It would fit better in a descriptive section in the Introduction to the Covenant.

It would also be helpful if the term 'Instruments of Communion' taken from the *Windsor Report* was explained in terms of the four Instruments being 'instruments of unity and means of communion.'

(25) It would strengthen the final sentence of paragraph I. of the current subsection 2 if it read 'preach and live out the gospel.' In addition, the second sentence needs to be an affirmation that each church makes about itself.

In the light of these suggestions, the two new subsections would then read:

(4) [We affirm] The place of the four Instruments of Communion as instruments of unity and means of communion which serve to discern our common mind in Communion issues, and to foster our interdependence and mutual accountability in Christ.

(5) Each of our churches orders and regulates its own affairs through its own system of government and law and is in that sense autonomous. However, we recognise that we are bound together, not juridically by a central legislative or executive authority, but by the Holy Spirit who calls and enables us to preach and live out the gospel in mutual loyalty and service.

(26) What is said about the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury would benefit from some revision and development. It needs to note that as the bishop who presides in the Anglican Communion, he is a locus and means of its unity, that he exercises a ministry of primacy that involves teaching, the gathering of his fellow bishops to take counsel together, and determining which churches belong to the Anglican Communion, that he acts as the host of the Lambeth Conference and the Primates' Meeting and that he is the President of the Anglican Consultative Council.

(27) What is said about the Primates meeting needs to note that it is a meeting of the presiding bishops of the Communion and acts as the executive committee of the Lambeth Conference.

(28) The description of the Anglican Consultative Council needs re-working. It is unhelpful to imply that the ACC in particular represents the bishops, clergy and laity of the Communion in a manner than the other Instruments do not and the final clause of the description of the gives a rather limited picture of its role It would better to say something along the lines of:

The Anglican Consultative Council is a body consisting of bishops, clergy and laity representing the member churches of the Anglican Communion. It has the task of fostering mutual responsibility and interdependence within the life of the Communion.

6 Unity of the Communion

(Nehemiah 2.17,18, Mt. 18.15-18, 1 Corinthians 12, 2 Corinthians 4.1-18, 13: 5-10, Galatians 6.1-10)

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.

Comment

(29) In order to provide the background to this section of the Covenant there needs to be a section in the Introduction that sets out the distinctive Anglican theological method, the distinctive Anglican approach to discernment and decision making in the life of the Church and the distinctiveness and importance of the Anglican liturgical tradition. This section in the Introduction should include material from the final two sentences of subsection 2. These sentences are descriptive in nature and therefore do not sit easily in a section which is concerned with commitment rather than description.

(30) The opening words of the section need to become 'As churches of the Anglican Communion we commit ourselves' and the rest of the section needs re-wording accordingly.

(31) The first sentence of subsection 4 also needs to contain a reference to matters which threaten our ecumenical relationships. We suggest:

...in matters which threaten the unity of the Communion, our fellowship with other churches and the effectiveness of our mission.

(32) The second sentence of subsection 4 should talk not just about 'moral authority,' but also about 'spiritual, pastoral and doctrinal authority.'

(33) Subsection 5 needs to make some reference to the enhanced role that the 1988 and 1998 Lambeth Conferences asked the Primates to exercise in order to make it clear that the Primates are not simply attempting to claim power over the Communion. It also needs to make clear that what is suggested is a mechanism for ensuring that significant and potentially divisive decisions are taken only after there has been a proper conversation about the issue in question across the Communion. In addition, the words 'their councils' in 5.2 need to be omitted since the Instruments do not have councils.

From a Church of England perspective, Stephen Slack has confirmed that it would be unlawful for the General Synod to delegate its decision making powers to the Primates, and that this therefore means that it could not sign up to a Covenant which purported to give the Primates of the Communion the ability to give 'direction' about the course of action that the Church of England should take.

In order to address these issues the subsection might be re-worded as follows:

[We commit ourselves] to submit matters in serious dispute that cannot be resolved by mutual admonition and counsel to the Primates so that (in accordance with the responsibilities given to them by the Lambeth Conferences of 1988 and 1998) they can offer guidance on how they may be resolved, either on the basis of the existing position of the Communion, or after the development of a common mind through consultation with the local churches of the Communion and their bishops and with the other Instruments of Communion .

(34) There needs to a new sub-section that addresses the issue of intervention in the affairs of Anglican churches. This needs to indicate that what we are really talking about is intervention in other Anglican provinces and to uphold the principle that such interventions should not normally take place, whilst allowing for the possibility of properly authorised schemes of pastoral oversight involving bishops from other churches when these are required in extraordinary circumstances. This subsection needs to say something along the lines of:

[We commit ourselves] to refrain from intervening in the life of other Anglican churches (sc. provinces) except in extraordinary circumstances where such intervention has been specifically authorised by the relevant Instruments of Communion.

(35) In view of what has just been said, subsection 6 needs to be renumbered as subsection 7. In view of the anxieties that have been expressed about the

use of this subsection as a mechanism for expelling churches from the Communion, it needs to explain the positive function of the exercise of discipline in the life of the Church (with biblical references to support this idea) and to contain a commitment to accepting the discipline involved in being a member church of the Anglican Communion. As before, the reference to the 'councils' of the Instruments of Communion needs to be removed.

In order to reflect these comments the subsection could be revised along the following lines:

Acknowledging the need for the exercise of discipline within the life of the Church in order to preserve its holiness and the effectiveness of its mission and to ensure that those who have erred are brought to repentance and restoration, we commit ourselves to accept the patterns of discipline involved in being part of the Anglican Covenant. In the most extreme circumstances, where member churches choose not to fulfil the substance of the covenant as understood by the Instruments of Communion, we will consider such churches to have relinquished for themselves the force and meaning of the covenant's purpose, and we accept that a process of restoration and renewal will be required to re-establish their covenant relationship with other member churches.

7 Our Declaration

(Psalms 46, 72.18,19, 150, Acts10.34-44, 2 Corinthians 13.13, Jude 24-25)

With joy and with firm resolve, we declare our Churches to be partners in this Anglican Covenant, releasing ourselves for fruitful service and binding ourselves more closely in the truth and love of Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory for ever. Amen.

Comment

(36) There are no comments on this section except for the point that has already been made about the need to take out the biblical texts at the beginning of the section and the suggestion that the words 'in the proclamation of the gospel' might be included after the words 'fruitful service' in order to make the specific character of this service clear.

II. A revision of the text from the Covenant Design Group in the light of the points made in the commentary

An Introduction to a Draft Text for an Anglican Covenant

‘This life is revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us – we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:2-3).

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit’ (1 John 4:13).

What is the life revealed to us? St John makes it clear that the fellowship or communion (*koinonia*) of life in the Church reflects the communion that is the divine life itself, the life of the Trinity. This is not the revelation of a reality remote from us, for in the communion of the Church we share in the divine life. The communion manifested in the life of the Church has the Trinitarian fellowship as its basis, model and ultimate goal. Conversely, the communion of the Persons of the Holy Trinity creates, structures and expounds the mystery of the communion experienced in the Church. It is within the and by the Church that we come to know the Trinity and by the Trinity we come to understand the Church because ‘the Church is full of Trinity.’¹

The Holy Scriptures tell us that in seeking communion with humankind despite our rebellion and sin, God made covenants with Noah, Abraham, Israel and David. His aim was to bless all nations as they responded to his invitation to live in communion with him, so that he might restore his image in them.

In Jesus there is now another covenant: “this is my blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt 26:28). In this covenant we find a renewed communion with God as we share with others the forgiveness of sins through Jesus. We discover our communion with others in mission through Christ, and our mission is to spread the communion of Christ, ultimately with the whole of creation.

Those who are in communion with God through Jesus Christ form one universal Church which is called to be: ‘through the work of the Spirit, an anticipatory sign of God’s healing and restorative future for the world. Those who, despite their own sinfulness, are saved by grace through their faith in God’s gospel (Eph. 2:1-10) are to live as a united family across traditional ethnic and other boundaries (2:11-12), and so are to reveal the wisdom of the one true God to the hostile and divisive powers of the world (3:9-10) as they explore and celebrate the love of God made known through Christ’s dwelling in their hearts (3:14-21). The redeemed unity which is God’s will for the whole creation is to be lived out within the life of the Church as, through its various God-given ministries, it is built up as the Body of Christ and grows to maturity not least through speaking the truth in love (1:10, 22-23; 4:1-16).’²

¹ *The Church of the Triune God* Paragraphs 1- 3

² *Windsor Report* Paragraph 2

In the providence of God, which operates in spite of the divisions caused by sin, various families of churches have grown up within the universal Church during the course of its history. Among these families is the Anglican Communion, which provides us our special charism and identity among the many followers and servants of Jesus. Three important characteristics of this special charism and identity are a distinctive Anglican theological method, distinctive Anglican patterns of leadership and decision-making and a distinctive Anglican liturgical tradition.

Theological Method

Anglican theological method is rooted in the teaching of Holy Scripture, ‘the fountain and well of truth,’³ containing all things necessary to salvation and constituting the rule and ultimate standard of faith, and recognizes the need for a communal reading of Scripture that is informed by biblical scholarship

It gives due weight to the witness to divine truth borne by the created order and the Catholic tradition (with particular importance being attached to the Catholic Creeds, the teaching of the Fathers of the first five centuries and the three ‘historic formularies’ – the Thirty Nine Articles, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal - that emerged out of the English Reformation).

It involves the use of reason, renewed by the Holy Spirit. ‘In vain were it to speak any thing of God, but that by reason men are able to judge of that they hear, and by discourse to discern how consonant it is to truth.’⁴

Finally, it accepts the obligation to proclaim the Apostolic faith afresh in each generation. This involves fidelity to the witness of Scripture, the created order, and the Catholic tradition in the context of the different cultures, societies and situations in which Anglicans are called to live, serve, worship and evangelise. Learning to proclaim the Apostolic faith afresh involves a process of study and debate within the Church because it means the emergence of new ideas and approaches, some of which, even though perceived as controversial when they arise, will lead to a deeper understanding of the implications of God’s revelation to us, others of which will ultimately prove to be distractions or even obstacles to the faith and all of which need to be tested by a process of shared discernment in the life of the Church.

Patterns of leadership and decision-making

This process of shared discernment in the life of the Church takes place within the framework provided by distinctive Anglican patterns of leadership and decision-making.

In accordance with the tradition of the Church going back to Apostolic times, the bishops of Anglican Communion are called to lead their churches in mission. They have a responsibility for teaching the Apostolic faith, acting as the chief ministers of the sacraments, exercising pastoral oversight and symbolizing and maintaining the

³ Thomas Cranmer *A Fruitful Exhortation to the Reading and Knowledge of Holy Scripture*.

⁴ Richard Hooker *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* III.VIII.11

unity of the Church. Their ministry is exercised in a personal, collegial and communal way.⁵

The collegial and communal aspects of episcopal ministry are exercised in consultation with other bishops and with representatives of the other clergy and of the laity. This consultation takes place through the various synodical structures that exist within the churches of the Anglican Communion and by means of the four 'Instruments of Communion.' These are the instruments of unity and means of communion which link the churches together in order that their common life may be built up and their common mission exercised more effectively. These Instruments of Communion are:

- I. The Archbishop of Canterbury, who, as the Bishop of the See of Canterbury presides in the Anglican Communion as whole, is a locus and means of unity. He exercises a ministry of primacy that involves teaching, the gathering of his fellow bishops to take counsel together, and determining which churches belong to the Anglican Communion. He is the host of the Lambeth Conference and the Primates' Meeting and President of the Anglican Consultative Council.
- II. The Lambeth Conference which, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, expresses worldwide episcopal collegiality by gathering the bishops of the Anglican Communion for common counsel, consultation and encouragement and serves as an instrument in guarding the faith and unity of the Communion.
- III. The Primates' Meeting, hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which assembles the presiding bishops of the Communion for mutual support and counsel and acts as the executive committee of the Lambeth Conference. It monitors global developments and works in full collaboration in doctrinal, moral and pastoral matters that have Communion-wide implications.
- IV. The Anglican Consultative Council, which is a body consisting of bishops, clergy and laity from the churches of the Communion. It has a responsibility for fostering mutual responsibility and interdependence within the life of the Communion.

The Anglican liturgical tradition

Alongside a distinctive Anglican theological method and distinctive Anglican patterns of leadership and decision making, a third key feature of Anglican identity is a distinctive Anglican liturgical tradition.

This tradition, which can be traced back to the work of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer in the sixteenth century, is a tradition of worship in the vernacular that is rooted in Scripture and also draws on liturgical material from the Patristic, Medieval and Reformation periods. The Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal attached to it have particular importance within this tradition and are among the three 'historic formulae,' which are seen as giving classic expression to the faith which Anglicans share.

⁵ See *Baptism Eucharist and Ministry*, Ministry III. B.26

The fact that these two liturgical texts are included among the historic formulae reflects the Anglican acceptance of the ancient principle *lex orandi, lex credendi* (the law of praying is the law of believing), in the sense that for Anglicans what is contained in their liturgies has a central role in articulating and defining their common faith and practice.

A shared liturgical tradition has been one of the key factors that has created a sense of common identity amongst Anglican Christians and it has thus played a central role in helping to create and sustain the unity of the Anglican Communion

Recognizing the duty and challenge of maintaining communion in the Anglican family of churches, and the need for mutual commitment and discipline as a witness to God's promise in a world and time of instability, conflict, and fragmentation, we covenant together as churches of this Anglican Communion to be faithful to God's promises through the historic faith we confess, the way we live together and the focus of our mission.

Our faith embodies a coherent testimony to what we have received from God's Word and the Church's long-standing witness; our life together reflects the blessings of God in growing our Communion into a truly global body; and the mission we pursue aims at serving the great promises of God in Christ that embrace the world and its peoples, carried out in shared responsibility and stewardship of resources, and in interdependence among ourselves and with the wider Church.

Our prayer is that God will redeem our struggles and weakness, and renew and enrich our common life so that the Anglican Communion may be used to witness effectively in all the world to the new life and hope found in Christ

1. Preamble

We, the Churches of the Anglican Communion, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, 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 of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and, together with all God's people, to grow up to the full stature of Christ.'

2 The Life We Share: Common Catholicity, Apostolicity and Confession of Faith

We recognise in one another:

(1) The one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and participating in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God;

(2) Profession of the faith that is uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures (which contain all things necessary for salvation and are the rule and ultimate standard of faith), which is set forth in the catholic creeds, and to which the historic Anglican formularies bear witness.

(3) Loyalty to this inheritance of faith as their inspiration and guidance under God in bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and making Him known to their societies and nations;

(4) Due administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord ordained by Christ himself, ministered with the unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and of the elements ordained by him.

3 Our Commitment to Confession of the Faith

In seeking to be faithful to God in our various contexts, we commit ourselves to:

(1) uphold and act in continuity and consistency with the catholic and apostolic faith, order and tradition;

(2) uphold and proclaim a pattern of Christian moral reasoning and discipline that is rooted in, and answerable to, the teaching of Holy Scripture and the Catholic tradition, and that reflects the renewal of humanity and the whole created order through the death and resurrection of Christ and the holiness that in consequence God gives to, and requires from, His people;

(3) seek in all things to uphold the Christian obligation to sustain Eucharistic communion, welcoming members of all other member churches to join in our own celebrations, and encouraging our members to participate in the Eucharist in another member church in accordance with the canonical discipline of that host church;

(4) ensure that biblical texts are handled faithfully, respectfully, comprehensively and coherently, primarily through the teaching and initiative of bishops and synods, and building on the best scholarship, in the belief that scriptural revelation must continue to illuminate, challenge and transform cultures, structures and ways of thinking;

(5) nurture and respond to prophetic and faithful leadership and ministry to assist our churches as courageous witnesses to the transformative power of the Gospel in the world.

(6) pursue a common pilgrimage with other members of the Communion to discern truth, so that people from all nations may truly be free and receive the new and abundant life that Christ offers .

4 The Life We Share with Others: Our Anglican Vocation

(1) **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 Church of the Apostles, the ancient common traditions, the rich history of the Church in Britain and Ireland shaped by the Reformation, and our growth into a global communion through the missionary work of the Church.

(2) As the Communion continues to develop into a worldwide family of interdependent churches, we also face challenges and opportunities for

mission at local, regional, and international levels. We cherish the fact that our faith and mission heritage offers us unique opportunities for discovery of the life that the whole gospel offers and for reconciliation and collaboration in mission with the Church throughout the world as we seek to bear witness to the transforming power of God's coming kingdom.

(3) **We acknowledge** that our common mission is shared with other churches and traditions. It is only with all the saints that we will comprehend the fuller dimensions of Christ's redemptive and immeasurable love.

(4) **We commit** ourselves to answering God's call to share in his healing and reconciling mission for our blessed but broken and hurting world, and, with mutual accountability, to share our God-given spiritual and material resources in this task.

(5) In this mission, which is the Mission of Christ, **we commit ourselves**, in accordance with the 'Five Marks of Mission'

1. to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God
2. to teach, baptize and nurture 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.

5 Our Unity and Common Life

(1) **We affirm** the potential importance of the structures of the Anglican Communion in assisting in the discernment, articulation and exercise of our shared faith and common mission.

(2) 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 exercised in a personal, collegial and communal manner.

(3) The ministry of bishops within the whole Church as guardians of faith, leaders in mission, and as a visible sign of unity.

(4) The place of the four 'Instruments of Communion,' as instruments of unity and means of communion which serve to discern our common mind in Communion issues, and to foster our interdependence and mutual accountability in Christ.

(5) Each of our churches orders and regulates its own affairs through its own system of government and law and is in that sense autonomous. However we recognise that we are bound together, not juridically by a central legislative or executive authority, but by the Holy Spirit who calls and enables us to preach and live out the gospel in mutual loyalty and service.

6 Unity of the Communion

As churches of the Anglican Communion:

We commit ourselves

(1) in essential matters of common concern, to have regard to the common good of the Communion in the exercise of our autonomy, and to support the work of the Instruments of Communion with our 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, 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, our fellowship with other churches 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 spiritual, pastoral and doctrinal authority which commands our respect;

(5) to submit matters in serious dispute that cannot be resolved by mutual admonition and counsel to the Primates so that (in accordance with the responsibilities given to them by the Lambeth Conferences of 1988 and 1998) they can offer guidance on how they may be resolved, either on the basis of the existing position of the Communion, or after the development of a common mind through consultation with the local churches of the Communion and their bishops and with the other Instruments of Communion.

(6) to refrain from intervening in the life of other Anglican churches (sc provinces) except in extraordinary circumstances where such intervention has been specifically authorised by the relevant Instruments of Communion.

(7) Acknowledging the need for the exercise of discipline within the life of the Church in order to preserve its holiness and the effectiveness of its mission and to ensure that those who have erred are brought to repentance, healing and restoration (Mt 18:15-20, 1 Cor 5:1-5, 2 Cor 2:5-11, 1 Tim 1:20), **we commit** ourselves to accept the patterns of discipline involved in being part of the Anglican Covenant. In the most extreme circumstances, where member churches choose not to fulfil the substance of the covenant as understood by the Instruments of Communion, we will consider such churches to have relinquished for themselves the force and meaning of the covenant's purpose, and we accept that a process of restoration and renewal will be required to re-establish their covenant relationship with other member churches.

7 Our Declaration

With joy and with firm resolve, **we declare** our Churches to be partners in this Anglican Covenant, releasing ourselves for fruitful service in the proclamation of the

gospel and binding ourselves more closely in the truth and love of Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory for ever. Amen.