

**A Response from the  
International Anglican Youth Network  
Anglican Covenant Draft for Discussion**

Preamble

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At the meeting of the International Anglican Youth Network (IAYN) at High Leigh, Hertfordshire, England, 3-7 September, 2007, the Network engaged in reflection and discussion on the Anglican Covenant: Draft for Discussion document.

The Network commends the committee for taking the responsibility of putting together this document, and appreciates the document's encouragement for the Church to be open and patient in times of challenge. The spirit of the document is a good example to young people across the Communion for finding unity in diversity.

The Network's response below includes our key topics of discussion, questions and concerns.

Topics

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**Instruments of Unity**

The Network affirms the leadership of the Primates and the Primates' Meeting. Concern was raised that the Covenant document dilutes the authority of the Provinces and the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) in favour of the Primates' Meeting. Section 5.(2).III and Section 6.(5) afford the Primates influence over areas of the Communion above and beyond the other Instruments of Unity and will effectively silence the voice of the young people of the communion, who currently have a voice on the ACC. We believe that this change will affect the very nature of the Communion and its decision making process. Apart from the Provinces, such power should be vested in the most representative and democratic of the Instruments of Unity, the ACC.

**Content and Language**

The language of the Covenant document is not comprehensible to an average Anglican in the pew, it is complicated and overly technical, especially to young people. The Network wonders if this is a document solely meant to be used by the Episcopate?

The Network is concerned that the spirit of the document does not reveal all intentions of the process, and this may expose the Covenant to a number of different interpretations and possible misuse by parties in the future. The Network feels that the document need be reworded to contain clearer intentions and processes.

### Section 6 (6)

The Network believes that any process concerning Provinces/Churches that have chosen to “relinquish...the force and meaning of the Covenant’s purpose” need be clearly articulated in the Covenant document. The Network wonders what protection this process will provide for such Provinces/Churches, and who will be in charge of the “process of restoration and renewal”? The Network wonders what these processes will involve, and is concerned that the threat of being asked to leave the Communion will halt potential progress within provinces. While aspects of the Covenant may encourage prophetic witness and creative mission, we believe that the spirit of the document may inhibit the developing mission of the Church.

### The Legacy of the Covenant

The Network wonders, what will be the legacy of this Covenant? Is this a document which deals only with the current situation? Will this curtail the mission of the church of the future, and its membership? Young people will inherit this document and the Church it may create. Should we not be working towards an inclusive Church which celebrates its diversity, as opposed to creating mechanisms for expelling those we do not agree with?

Another key question posed in the Network’s discussions was: what will happen to Provinces who choose not to sign up to the Covenant?

### Conclusion

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The IAYN encourages openness, further listening and discernment around the document and believes this is an important process we should all be engaged in. We pray that we may continue to find ways to celebrate our unity in diversity, as brothers and sisters in Christ.