

# DIOCESE OF PORT MORESBY

## ANGLICAN CHURCH OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA



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The Revd Canon Kenneth Kearon,  
Secretary General,  
Anglican Communion Office,  
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11<sup>th</sup> November 2009

Dear Canon Kearon,

### **Comments from the House of Bishops on the Ridley Cambridge Draft of the proposed Anglican Communion Covenant**

Greetings from Papua New Guinea.

The Anglican Church of PNG has valued her place in the Anglican Communion since the establishment of the Province in 1977. Our priority is mission – all five marks are important for us in this beautiful but often unstable land. As a founder member of the Melanesian Council of Churches we approach this task alongside our brothers and sisters in other churches. Our ecumenical commitment is shown in many educational, medical and social initiatives and also through a long standing regional theological dialogue with the RC Church.

We are a Province on the traditional and catholic side of the present Anglican spectrum. We have not ordained women for both cultural and theological reasons. We have not been able to accept that the episcopal ordination of a practicing gay person and the blessing of same-sex unions are legitimate developments. We have been saddened that some Provinces have proceeded with these things without there first being a much greater Communion wide consensus.

At recent Primates' Meetings our former archbishop, Most Revd James Ayong, who retired in September 2009, consistently supported the Windsor process including the proposals for an

Anglican Covenant. We have not signed up to GAFCON, all seven bishops attended Lambeth 2008 and there we supported the three moratoria.

We are happy to receive all four parts of the latest Ridley Cambridge Draft (RCD) of the Anglican Communion Covenant as a generous attempt to meet the objections to earlier drafts and to move the process forward constructively.

In a key phrase the RCD describes each Church as living “in communion with autonomy and accountability” (3.1.2). We see this as an important description of our covenanted life together in the Communion and much better than simply describing Provinces as autonomous. Clearly the Covenant must therefore reflect both autonomy and accountability, which is the upholding of our “mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Body of Christ, and the responsibility of each to the Communion as a whole” (3.2.2). In the RCD there is abundant concern for autonomy and we trust a willingness to say at some point that certain actions are indeed “incompatible with the Covenant” (4.2.4).

Any Anglican Covenant would have to be approved for Papua New Guinea by the Provincial Council, a body that meets once a year, usually in June, and which is made up of the diocesan bishops and elected clergy and laity from each of the five dioceses.

With our prayers and good wishes for your work in the ACO and in the development of the Covenant.

Yours in Christ.

Rt Revd Peter Ramsden  
Bishop of Port Moresby  
on behalf of the House of Bishops of the Anglican Church of PNG.