



CGD/PRO9/01

The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

Te Hähi Mihinare ki Aotearoa ki Niu Tireni,
ki Ngä Moutere o te Moana Nui a Kiwa

A SUBMISSION ON THE ST ANDREW'S DRAFT

Introduction

The Province of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia is grateful for a second opportunity to comment on the proposed Anglican Covenant and in particular to address the three questions posed by the Covenant Design Group. The Province had sent an earlier response to the "Nassau" Draft. Although the Lambeth Commentary has since been received, and the Primates' recent Communique is now available, the Province noted that the original request only related to the "St Andrew's Draft". Given the widespread circulation of the Lambeth Commentary and the recent reports from Alexandria, it is somewhat inevitable that the current thinking of our Province has been informed by these subsequent papers.

The Three Questions

The three questions and our summarised replies are as follows:

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

The Maori or Indigenous New Zealand constitutional partner in this Province does not support an Anglican Covenant. The reasons for this can be summarized as follows:

- The principle of provincial autonomy is closely linked to the indigenous view of '*rangatiratanga*' or 'self determination' whereby autonomy is not lightly ceded.
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- The experience of Maori with historical covenants or *kawanata* has been fraught with controversy and breach of the terms of covenants by colonial partners has in the past led to landlessness, voicelessness and contributed to the near annihilation of a people. There is therefore great discomfort with the use of the term 'covenant'.
- Anglican polity has always been one of dispersed authority and not centralised authority.

The Pakeha constitutional partner, those who have no traditional indigenous links to Aotearoa or the Pacific and who are largely represented in the New Zealand Dioceses, are prepared to give an '*in principle*' commitment to the concept of a Covenant. One Diocese writes that they wish to argue vigorously for the principle of the Covenant. It writes;

[Our] Diocese is committed to the mission of the church. And therefore we are committed to unity because the alternative is a barrier to real mission. However we do not believe in a unity based upon something as intangible as "historic loyalties". We believe in a unity that is based upon our orthodox faith that is reflected in our 39 Articles of faith and on the historic creeds of the church. Theology must be the basis of our unity. We believe that the Covenant outlined in the St Andrew's Draft presents this faith clearly and honestly which is why we strongly commit ourselves to the Covenant process.

Most other Dioceses are less enthusiastic but are prepared to give a guarded commitment to 'a' covenant but not necessarily the St Andrew's Draft or indeed any draft where the wording and proposed processes are punitive, exclusive, overly legal or quasi juridical, and divisive. Some of the wording expressed in the St Andrew's Draft was adjudged deeply un-Anglican; particularly the Appendix which was perceived as theological flawed, internally incoherent and practically unworkable.

2) Is it possible to give some indication of any Synodical Process which would have to be undertaken in order to adopt the Covenant?

The means of adoption of any document including a Covenant within our Province, would be determined by the wording. If the wording was in conflict with our Constitution / Te Pouhere, a four year Canonical and Synodical process would need to be undertaken to incorporate the changes. Even following this process there would be no guarantee that the inclusion would be successful as two different General Synods and a majority within each Tikanga would need to consider and accede to the changes.

If the wording did not impact on the Constitution / Te Pouhere, a Canon could be drafted but this could still take a minimum of two years and possibly four years to progress.

The easiest option would be if the Province determined that an Anglican Covenant be adopted by a Standing Resolution of General Synod /te Hinota Whanui.. This would not carry the same weight as a Canon or Constitutional change but it would give the Covenant a formal Provincial status. It also has the advantage of enabling ready adoption or incorporation of the changes and revisions that would almost inevitably arise as the kinks and fishhooks of the Covenant become apparent in its initial implementation.

3) In considering the St Andrew's Draft for an Anglican Covenant, are there any elements which would need extensive change to make the process of Synodical adoption viable?

This question is ambiguous as it is uncertain whether the elements to which it refers are portions of the Draft itself or elements of the Synodical process. We have assumed the former.

The key to viability and adoption is the wording. As stated there is no support for the Appendix and there is considerable unhappiness about the wording of Section Three. Even if redrafted it is unlikely that Tikanga Maori would consent to the adoption of any Covenant that affected its sovereignty and in this Province any one Tikanga can veto a Synodical Provincial adoption. This would not preclude the other two Tikanga partners adopting the Covenant at a Diocesan level.

Conclusion

Despite the concerns expressed Maori Anglicans believe that a longer conversation is needed and they want to part of that conversation. We can say without reservation that every part of the Province of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia is passionately committed to the Anglican Communion regardless of the outcome of the Covenant process. The concept of whanau, fono and family – of being united in the family of God is the theological underpinning of that commitment. While we consider it inevitable that there will be prodigal sons and daughters and Dioceses who will at times leave the family home, the role of the family is to wait and carry on with the mission and to ensure there is a home and a welcome to which, should they choose, they

can return. A Covenant should model the best parts of family life – it should invite participation, should offer reconciliation and should model relational love in a spirit of generosity and graciousness.