LAMBETH COMMENTARY

RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF WEST AFRICA

1. Its self-description as a Commentary must be taken seriously i.e. it must be read alongside a substantive text. As it stands, it is a sensitive attempt to respond to questions of siblings in the family (p.3 para. 5). The responses are reasonable and acceptable.

2. Important as our roots are, especially the inherited Anglican instruments, the Covenant is an attempt to hold the family together in a given crisis. So the Covenant paper has its own identity and place, and is consistent with Article XXIV, the option for the vernacular paradigm. This requires us to move beyond traditional formularies to explore the image of covenant which is, after all, biblical.

3. It might be helpful near the beginning to locate the Covenant theme in “Common faith and mission and worship”. The first two are mentioned in paragraph 1. The worship is missing. Of all the Reformation traditions, Anglicanism was essentially a liturgical renewal. Hence the prominence of BCP in our life together. In a sense the Covenant is our covenanting to worship together. Our interest in worship also puts the emphasis on shared spirituality. It is not about religious camps (politics). It is about obedience to the will of God.

4. Mission may be beefed up. From our perspective, the Church is mission in the sense of defining herself by mission. Many remain at the contours of mission i.e. proclamation, making disciples and obedience to will of God in social, economic and political spheres. When we speak of beefing it up at the beginning, we were thinking of change, transformation and renewal. Covenant is an aid to joining God’s project of change, transformation and renewal.

5. Covenant is a project of communion – community and communicating. That perspective should help move the task from political parties to deeper identity search.

6. No text will satisfy all wings of a communion. So it needs to be said that Provinces are required to translate the end product of CDG to their Provinces.

7. There may be some difficulty in our Province. The document has to go to Provincial Synod. It has been a job getting the Province together for financial and political reasons. One would also like to see Diocesan Synods take ownership of it as well. What this means for time table, we are not sure.