



Lusitanian Church

Catholic Apostolic Evangelic

(Anglican Communion)

Response to the Draft Covenant Text

Towards an Anglican Covenant

The Standing Committee of the Lusitanian Catholic Apostolic Evangelic Church, under the chairmanship of its Diocesan Bishop Fernando da Luz Soares, met on November 10, gave consideration to the Draft Covenant text issued by the Covenant Design Group towards an Anglican Covenant.

Recognizing that the consultation that is now being taken was addressed to the Provinces, and despite of not being a Province, the Lusitanian Church, as part of the Anglican Communion as a Extra-Provincial Diocese, considered that it should express its position on a so burning issue in which the Communion is now strongly involved. Likewise, it was decided that a official response should be elaborated with the following points born on the discussion about the draft text for an Anglican Covenant.

1. The Lusitanian Church agrees with the elaboration of a Covenant whose text, in accordance with the proposal of the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, will serve:
 - a) to consolidate trust, cooperation and action in the relationships of the churches with each other and with the Communion as a whole;
 - b) to clarify the identity and the mission of the Anglican Communion and the churches which integrate it, facilitating the self-understanding of the Anglican Consultative Council and the ecumenical relationships.
2. The Lusitanian Church accepts a Covenant that respect the structure of the Anglican Communion as a conciliar family, that is, the relationship among the churches that seeks unity in the acceptance of diversity and maintains bounds of affection between the churches within the mutual respect of their own autonomy.
3. However, the careful reading of the draft text proposed by the Covenant Design Group provided to us a sense of discomfort with some points of conflict, which rather than unite can be instruments of disunity and absence of bounds, namely:
 - a) attempt to transform the structure of the Anglican Communion in a confessional family, with the definition of statutes and rules that it will certainly reduce or even remove the richness of the conciliar unity;
 - b) explicit determination to point a standard vision of morality as the main point of unity in the Communion;
 - c) Claim to give to the Primates Meeting a binding statute (court, curia or other) with legislative powers upon the Provinces, limiting their autonomy and the conciliar richness of the Anglican Communion.

4. Accordingly, we have many reservations on the draft text for the Anglican Covenant issued by the Covenant Design Group, as it might lead to the extinction of the richness of diversity that characterizes the Anglican Communion as an ecclesial body and, in consequence, the objectives of the Covenant, referred in the paragraphs 1 and 2 above, won't be achieved.

The Lusitanian Church Standing Committee realizes that the richness of Anglicanism lies in its diversity lived in conciliar unity, even with all the difficulties and tensions that this process entails (our cross, as a path to the Resurrection), and believes that the proposed draft does not promote the necessary peace and harmony, but, above all, can be an instrument of real disagreement and division in the Anglican Communion.

Thus, we urge the draft to be fully refunded so that the Anglican Communion could be raised as a true family of churches in the service of the mission of Jesus Christ in the diversity of mankind, for whom He gave Himself.

We will continue to pray for the anglican church leaders asking the Lord to guide their hearts and minds so that, in the humility of Jesus Christ, they will discover the ways for the Unity of our Communion.

Diocesan Centre, Vila Nova de Gaia, 28 December 2007

+ Fernando Soares