



THE CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF MYANMAR

Bishopscourt
140 pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road
Dagon P.O. (11191)
Yangon, Myanmar.

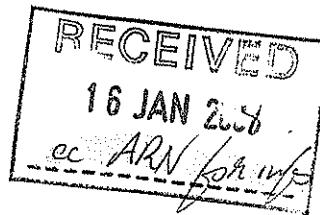
Tel (R) : 95-1-285379 95-1-381909
Tel (O) : 95-1-246813 95-1-395279
Fax : 95-1-251-405 95-1-395314
Cable : Episcopal, Yangon

58156
RECEIVED 16 JAN 2008

COPY

The Most Revd. Dr. Rowan Williams
Archbishop of Canterbury
Lambeth Palace
London SE17JU

31st December 2007



ABC
cc JM

Dear Archbishop Rowan,

Greetings in the name of our Lord. I am sending to you the initial response of the draft of the Anglican covenant. The draft was studied by a group of people assigned by the Provincial Standing Committee and a response was put up to the Standing Committee held in September 2007.

Our responses will be pointed out only where there might be a dispute or debatable words, phrases etc., which mean we agree all the rest proposed in this Anglican Covenant Draft.

2. The Life We Share:

No.(2) Holy Scriptureas being the rule and standard of faith.....afresh in each generation. Any action or practice which is going against the Holy Scriptures must be denounced. Honestly speaking, we all human beings go against the teachings of the Scriptures in one way or another.

No.(6) Instead of using "to this generation" we prefer using "to each generation" as used in No.(2).

3. Our Commitment to Confession of Faith

(1) "...received by the developed in the communion of member churches"

It is debatable for the use of developed in the communion of member churches. As each province has developed its traditions according to its context, it may stray from biblical derived moral value as mentioned in line 2.

(3) "...ensure that biblical texts are handled faithfully, respectfully, comprehensively and coherently".

These terms are also debatable each diocese or province would claim that it does so. For example, the majority of the Anglicans in Myanmar are illiterates they take the biblical text mostly literally and think that they handle the biblical text faithfully. So the ordinary believers usually accuse theologians and scholars as being misleading the church through their scholarly interpretations of the biblical texts.



THE CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF MYANMAR

Bishopscourt
140 pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road
Dagon P.O. (11191)
Yangon, Myanmar

Tel (R) : 95-1-285379 95-1- 381909
Tel (O) : 95-1-246943 95-1- 396279
Fax : 95-1-251-405 95-1- 395314
Cable : Episcopal, Yangon

6. Unity of the Communion

(2) "...to proclaim the Gospel afresh in each generation...." If the word "afresh" means "a different or an alternative or a new," we do agree. We realize what is right for this generation is not appropriate for the next generations.

(3) "...consistent with the Scripture..." This phrase also needs to be explained. There are two problems here. One is the problem of the translation from original Hebrews to Greek Vulgate and to other languages. For examples, there are differences between Septuagint (LXX) and Hebrews original version, and Vulgate (Latin version). Later translations also contain such differences in each version. It is very difficult whether "the Scriptures" refer to the original Hebrews and Greek Versions or any version of the Bible. Without using Bible commentary it would be really hard for the believers to understand Matt. 7:1-2, "Do not judge other, so that God will not judge you for God will judge you in the same way you judge others..." See also & 7:21-23. In Matthew it is said, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" and in Luke, "Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful." Not to judge others, to be perfect and be merciful are quite difficult to do.

The second one is the "interpretation" of biblical texts, not the Bible itself. Comparative studies of the Law codes in Exodus, Numbers with Deuteronomy, and 1 & 2 Sam, 1 & 2 Kings with 1 & 2 Chronicles. When the ordinary believers read these books, without using Bible commentary, it would be very difficult for them to know which texts are correct. In Myanmar we do not have Bible commentary not only in Burmese which is the common language but also in other ethnic groups. Due to that, the phrase "consistent with the Scriptures" is totally agreeable in theory but in practice it is quite argumentative.

I believe the Covenant will be life giving which will serve God's purposes in strengthening the integrity and unity of our Anglican Communion.

With love and prayer in Christ.

Your Sincerely,

Samuel San Si Htay

Archbishop and Bishop of Yangon