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cc 7/11

The Most Rev. and Rt. Hon. Rowan Williams  
Lambeth Palace,  
London, SE1 7JU  
ENGLAND

December 29, 2007

Dear Archbishop Rowan,

Christmas greetings from Japan.

As the House of Bishops of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai, we would like to send you our response to An Anglican Covenant, draft prepared by the Covenant Design Group, in January, 2007.

The NSKK House of Bishops had released the response to the Windsor Report 2004 to be shared at the Primates' meeting in Newry, Northern Ireland in February, 2005. The basic position of the NSKK in the issue of the Anglican Covenant had already been explained in this response, and we would like to confirm it at this time again as it is in the response. Attached is the copy of "Comments on the Windsor Report by the Nippon Seikokai House of Bishops," the response to the Windsor Report 2004.

As you could see in the paragraph 10 of our comments, the NSKK believes that the best traditions and legacies of the Anglican Communion make this kind of codified covenant unnecessary, and that even if it is agreed that this kind of basic mutual agreement needs to be codified, it should happen only after a number of years of careful examination and then only as a minimum basic agreement.

We believe that the proposed Anglican Covenant should not be put forward as it is to be ratified at each province of the Anglican Communion, because we are afraid that it would create the situation where the churches which do not ratify the Anglican Covenant be excluded from the Communion and thus the split of the Communion be finalized in spite of the effort to maintain the unity of the Communion.

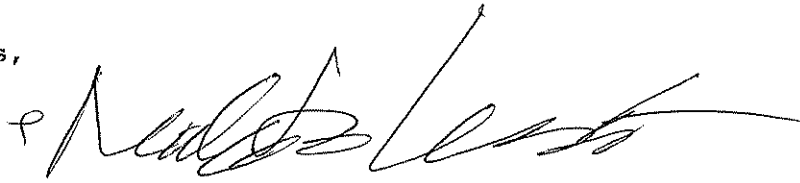
We, the House of Bishops of NSKK, reaffirm that as well as the historic position of the Archbishop of Canterbury be the central focus of both unity and mission within the Communion (Windsor Report, paragraph 109), other instruments of unity: the Lambeth Conference, Primates' Meeting and the ACC, are essential entities symbolizing the unity of the Anglican Communion, and we would like to pay our respects to those who are working hard in these instruments to maintain the unity of our beloved Communion and to pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance upon them. We expect that the instruments of unity would keep working hard to do their important task,

and we see no need to create any other instrument of unity in addition to those 4 instruments.

We understand the import of the primates' meeting. However, it seems that the role and authority of the primate and/or primates' meeting varies from one province to the other, and we do not think there is common understanding for the primate and/or primates' meeting in the Anglican Communion. Thus, we never wish that the primates' meeting have power to restrain each province with its decisions.

Your Grace Rowan, please be assured that you are always in our prayer. May the Lord guide you and protect you at this difficult time.

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nathaniel M. Uematsu'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'N' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

The Most Rev. Nathaniel M. Uematsu  
Primate of Japan & Bishop of Hokkaido

## Comments on the Windsor Report by the Nippon Seikokai House of Bishops

February 2005

1. As a result of the confusion in the Anglican Communion caused by the Episcopal Church of the USA (ECUSA) and the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) with a series of resolutions and actions around the subject of homosexuals persons, a committee to advise the Archbishop of Canterbury on the nature and unity of the Anglican Communion was set up. The report of this committee, "The Windsor Report 2004", was made public in October 2004. The House of Bishops of the Nippon Seikokai (NSKK), as a member of the Communion, has paid serious attention to this report.
2. This committee carried out a basic examination of the essential nature of the Anglican Communion and the direction the churches connected with it should take. It further advised the parties (churches) concerned in the series of actions on the steps they should take. The process leading to these conclusions cannot have been an easy one. We are deeply grateful for their efforts.
3. The NSKK, at the Primates' meeting of 2003, has already expressed its regret that ECUSA and ACC. (Diocese of New Westminster) proceeded to that series of resolutions and actions in spite of the concern expressed (Resolutions 1: 10-4) by the [1998] Lambeth Conference and the Primates' meeting. In that light we understand the basic viewpoint expressed in the Windsor Report.
4. However, it should be enough for the Anglican Communion as a whole, or the Archbishop of Canterbury, to urge the churches (dioceses) concerned with those kinds of resolutions and actions to reconsider their stand. There is no need to enumerate (Section D) the kind of 'advisories' (practical directions) that have no precedent in the history of the Communion. Similarly, it should also be sufficient just to urge reconsideration of their actions on the part of those bishops who have intervened in the legitimate resolutions and actions of autonomous provinces. (The above relates to Mandate 2 [page 8 of the Report] assigned to the committee.)

5. At the same Lambeth Conference that passed the resolution to refrain from the ordination of homosexual persons, the bishops of the Communion urged us to commit ourselves to listen to the voices of homosexual people. The NSKK sincerely hopes that every province and diocese of the Communion will understand the importance of this resolution and act upon it.

6. At this time the NSKK wishes particularly to emphasize that element of the Anglican tradition which seeks all possible means to recognize the diversity which emerges in the process of the indigenisation (inculturation) of the Gospel.

7. Moreover, while the NSKK believes in the authority of the Scriptures, we understand that the text of Scripture was formed within a particular historical and faith context. Accordingly, we believe that, in a context which differs both in history and in the expression of faith, we are actually permitted a variety of ways of interpreting Scripture.

8. Based on the above assumptions (6 and 7), we cannot think that the Church can have only one, absolute view of human sexuality. While recognising the authority of the Bible, there is every possibility that in the process of working out its message, differences of time and culture may be reflected in the understanding of human sexuality. We would like to think of the series of decisions and actions of ECUSA and ACC in this light.

9. This [Windsor] report makes a number of proposals concerning the way the unity of the Anglican Communion should be. However, the NSKK does not think that unity can be manifested only if we take the same interpretation of Scripture and the same theological standpoint concerning our basic understanding of human sexuality.

10. Concerning the proposed Covenant for the Anglican Communion, the NSKK believes that the best traditions and legacies of the Anglican Communion make this kind of codified covenant something that is unnecessary for either side in the argument. In particular, the statements in Part III, Article 10 of the Proposal, concerning "moral values," and the "vision of humanity" appear to imply a variety whose considerable latitude ought not to be limited by such a covenant. Even if it is agreed that this kind of basic mutual agreement needs to be codified within the Anglican Communion, it should happen only after a number of years of examination and then only as a minimum basic agreement.