

The Rev'd Canon Gregory Cameron
St. Andrew's House
16 Tavistock Crescent
London, UK W11 1AP

Student Body
Wycliffe College, University of Toronto
5 Hoskin Avenue
Toronto, ON M5S 1H7

Dear Rev'd Canon Gregory Cameron:

We wish to affirm and commend the work of the Covenant Design Group in developing a Covenant Agreement that seeks to provide a way forward for our life together in Christ.

We understand that this document is future-oriented and that it is not meant to address current Communion issues. Further, we recognize that the Covenant is to be a response, or an "expression of communion," to what has already been given through what God has done in Jesus Christ; it is not simply an agreement between individuals. As such, we realize that the Covenant can only create a framework for establishing definitions of what it means to be in relationship; by living these definitions out faithfully, trust can be established and subsequent relationships can be achieved then deepened. We want to acknowledge and affirm that the document has been left intentionally vague concerning specific propositional statements of content in order to leave time and space for God to work rather than to engage in a humanly derived effort to set right our own ailing Church. Although content has been left vague we appreciate the more juridical nature of the appendix which clarifies how we are called to respond to God's gift of covenant in our relationships with one another; it provides a foundation for natural justice that gives equal voice to the diverse members of the Communion. Thus, we recognize in the document a firm commitment to a structure that limits our absolute autonomy by calling us to interrelationship and to mutual accountability in which we are, by the Spirit, conformed into Christ's image.

Finally, we want to affirm this as a positive way forward and as a necessary way of articulating and beginning to live out our calling to both Truth and unity. We recognize that you have been asked to undertake a task with the goal to develop a Covenant Agreement; not to decide whether or not a Covenant Agreement is suitable for addressing our life together. It is with this understanding that we seek to provide feedback to the St. Andrew's Draft of this Covenant. Please see our recommendations attached.

Sincerely,

Michael Caines, President, Wycliffe Student Body
Katie Silcox, Vice President Theology, Wycliffe Student Body

The Wycliffe Students' Suggestions for Revision of the St Andrew's Text of the Anglican Covenant Agreement:

Introduction

St Andrew's Text

2. Our divine calling into communion is established in God's purposes for the whole of creation (Eph. 1:10; 3:9ff.). It is extended to all humankind, so that, in our sharing of God's life as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God might restore in us his own image. Through time, according to the Scriptures, God has furthered this calling through covenants made with Noah, Abraham, Israel, and David. The prophet Jeremiah looked forward to a new covenant not written on tablets of stone but upon the heart (Jer.31.31-34) In God's Son Christ Jesus, a new covenant is given us, established in his "blood ... poured out for the many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt. 26:28), secured through his resurrection from the dead (Eph. 1:19-23), and sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit poured into our hearts (Rom. 5:5). Into this covenant of death to sin and of new life in Christ we are baptized, and empowered to share God's communion in Christ with all people, to the very ends of the earth and of creation.

Suggested revision and reasoning:

This is a very strong statement of Christian truth. In addition, it would be appropriate to expand on Christ's role in re-establishing communion since sin inhibits a direct imaging of the Trinity in our community. Christ is essential for bridging this gap. We suggest the following be added before the last sentence:

2. Through Christ's covenant faithfulness the communion that Adam's sin had obscured is restored as God faithfully conforms the Church to Christ's kenotic image: "for just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19).

Suggested appendix:

Christ's restoration of our communion with God and neighbour affirms that the very commitments and affirmations called for by this document should be recognized and undertaken as a spiritual imitation of His mission for us.

St. Andrew's Text

4. In the providence of God, which holds sway even over our divisions caused by sin, various families of churches have grown up within the universal Church in the course of history. Among these families is the Anglican Communion, which provides us a special charism and identity among the many followers and servants of Jesus. Recognizing the wonder, beauty and challenge of maintaining communion in this family of churches, and the need for mutual commitment and discipline as a witness to God's promise in a world and time of instability, conflict and

fragmentation, we covenant together as churches of this Anglican Communion to be faithful to God's promises through the historic faith we confess, the way we live together and the focus of our mission.

Suggested Revision and Reasoning:

This statement calls for mutual accountability and discipline as necessary elements to maintaining the bounds of life together in communion and faith. We believe that it is important to affirm this statement; however, it need also to expand on the idea that this relationship is both a part of the historic faith of the people of God, and the mission and vocation mentioned in this and other paragraphs. We suggest the following revisions:

4. ... Recognizing the wonder, beauty and challenge of maintaining communion in this family of churches, and the need for mutual commitment and discipline as a witness to God's promise in a world and time of instability, conflict and fragmentation, we covenant together as churches of this Anglican communion to be faithful to God's promises through the historic faith that we confess and have communally received from the prophets and apostles, through the way we live together, and through the focus of our mission.

SECTION ONE: Our Inheritance of Faith

St. Andrew's Text and suggestion revision and reasoning:

1.1 Each Church of the Communion affirms:

This is a minor editorial detail, however, we feel an important one: In the title above, the word "Church" is capitalized, however, in the *Introduction*, section 4 "... we covenant together as churches of this Anglican Communion" the word "church" is in lower case. While normally such minor detail could be ignored, the lower case and capitalization of this word have theological significance and should therefore be used consistently throughout the document to ensure the theological meaning of the word is clearly understood.

St. Andrew's Text

1.1.4 That it upholds the historic episcopate locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of his Church.

Suggested Revision and Reasoning:

While this statement does affirm the historic role of the episcopate as articulated in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral (CLQ) of 1886/88, it is not clear from either this document or the text of the CLQ, as to how this role fits into the role of the Primates. We therefore suggest that in the appendix, a section be added that clearly articulates the origin of the authority of the Primates, their scope of authority and decision making, and discussion of these items in distinction and relation to that of the episcopacy.

One of the current challenges brought forth by scholars in the Roman Catholic Church is

a failure to clarify the ministry of bishops at the Second Vatican Council. This lack of coherent theology of the episcopacy has led to failure to articulate the witness of the faithful (the apostolic faith that resides in the church - communal worship, sacramental practice, and the ministerial outreach to the poor and marginalized - the local) to the universal (the apostolic office of bishop who ensures the integrity of the apostolic faith – thus its teaching and its concomitant obligations to attend to the apostolic witness of the community they serve), and vice versa (these discussions have taken place in the context of the work of J-M. Tillard especially). Although the Anglican Communion maintains a distinctive structure in relation to that of the Roman Catholic Church, insight that illuminates challenges and opportunities in episcopal ordering of a catholic nature shed light on our current challenges and could prove a valuable resource in mitigating similar challenges.

It would seem prudent to proactively engage the task of clarifying the interrelationships between the ministries of both bishops and primates. We therefore suggest clarification of the historic role of the episcopacy and its relation to the role of the primates in an appendix.

St Andrew's Text

1.2 In living out this inheritance of faith together in varying contexts, each Church of the Communion commits itself:

(1.2.1) to uphold and act in continuity and consonance with Scripture and the catholic and apostolic faith, order and tradition

Suggested Revision and Reasoning:

While the use of the term “catholic” should be understood to refer to Scripture and faith received and discerned by the whole Church across time and space, this is often not clear to readers. We want to affirm and strengthen the concept of reception and discernment of God’s Word across time and space in the structural ‘arena’ of the Church. We therefore suggest:

(1.2.1) to uphold and act in continuity and consonance with Scripture as received and discerned in the catholic and apostolic faith, order and tradition

St. Andrew's Text

(1.2.2) to uphold and proclaim a pattern of Christian theological and moral reasoning and discipline that is rooted and answerable to the teaching of Holy Scripture ...

Suggested Revision and Reasoning:

The statement needs to be more explicit in the audience it is addressing; its audience should include the faculty, staff and students of Anglican seminaries throughout the world. Seminary is about much more than learned facts and academic study; and the seminary that employs those who do not receive, hear and confess the historic faith of the Church cannot adequately prepare and form the faith of our future Church and seminary leaders. We therefore suggest:

(1.2.2) to uphold and proclaim a pattern of Christian theological and moral reasoning as well as discipline in both parish life and seminary formation that is rooted and answerable to the teaching of Holy Scripture ...

In addition to the alteration of this statement, we would suggest a footnote to this statement that includes a ‘thicker’ description of the role of faculty and staff in the formation of Anglican theological students and clarification of the basic expectations of Anglican postulants/ordained persons graduating from the colleges’ respective programs. We are aware of a Communion wide study of theological education currently underway and would suggest that results from the report be incorporated into this section of the Covenant (see ***Suggested Revision and Reasoning*** for section 1.2.5 below).

St. Andrew’s Text

(1.2.5) nurture and respond to prophetic and faithful leadership in ministry and mission to equip God’s people to be courageous witnesses to the power of the Gospel in the world.

Suggested Revision and Reasoning:

This sentence says too little. It is unclear whether it is the same people who nurture and respond to prophetic leadership that are equipped by this leadership for courageous witness. It goes without saying that such leadership should be nurtured, but if those doing the responding are the same as those being equipped, the practical problem becomes how such leadership is to be recognized and responded to. What is the character of a faithful prophet? The prophetic office of Jesus and of the Old Testament prophets is one of obedience to the Word of God and radical sacrifice on behalf of God’s people. Therefore we suggest:

(1.2.5) To nurture and respond to prophetic leadership that faithfully and apostolically conforms to Christ’s pattern - in radical sacrifice on behalf of God’s people and in obedience to the Word of God – so that we may be made courageous witnesses to the power of the Gospel in the world.

SECTION TWO: The Life we Share with Others: Our Anglican Vocation

St Andrew's Text

(2.2.1) to answer God's call to evangelization and to share in his healing and reconciling mission for our blessed but broken, hurting and fallen world, and, with mutual accountability, to share our God-given spiritual and material resources in this task.

Suggested Revision and Reasoning:

Our suggestions for Section 2 express a desire to see more references to the Mission of Christ as stated in (2.2.2). This could clarify that our activity is not an addition to, but a participation in Christ's work. Corresponding to this is a need for a few more references to the sin for which Christ's mission was initiated, and the repentance he made possible. So we suggest:

(2.2.1) to answer God's call to evangelization and to share Christ's own healing and reconciling mission for our blessed but sinful, hurting and fallen world, and, with mutual accountability, to share our God-given spiritual and material resources in this task.

St Andrew's Text

(2.2.2) In this mission, which is the Mission of Christ, each Church undertakes:

We suggest:

(2.2.2) In this mission, which is the Mission of Christ, each Church undertakes along with him:

St Andrew's Text

(2.2.2.a) to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God

We suggest:

(2.2.2.a) to call to repentance and to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God (Matt. 3:2).

SECTION 3: Our Unity and Common Life

3.1 Each Church of the Communion affirms:

3.1.2 ... Churches of the Anglican Communion are not bound together by a central legislative, executive or judicial authority. Trusting in the Holy Spirit, who calls and enables us to live in mutual affection, commitment and service, we seek to affirm our common life through those

instruments of Communion by which our Churches are enabled to develop a common mind

Suggested Revision and Reasoning:

Our suggestions for this paragraph express a desire to further emphasize our submission to the Spirit's work in conforming our faith community and our individual lives to Christ's image; this requires language that affirms the Spirit's work in calling us to accountability both to God and to one another. We therefore suggest the following:

3.1.2 ... Churches of the Anglican Communion are not bound together by a central legislative, executive or judicial authority. However, we are bound to a unified social order of mutual submission as we discern Scriptural truth across time; it is in this relationship that we are conformed to Christ's image. Trusting in the Holy Spirit, who calls and enables us to live in relationships of mutual accountability and affection, trust, commitment and service, we seek to affirm our common life through those instruments of Communion by which our Churches are enabled to develop a common mind.

St Andrew's Text:

3.2.2 to respect the constitutional autonomy of all of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, while upholding the interdependent life and mutual responsibility of the Churches and the responsibility of each to the Communion as a whole. Footnote cf. the Schedule to the Dar es Salaam Communiqué of the Primates' Meeting 2007

Suggested Revision and Reasoning:

This issue is essential to the challenges we face in developing relationships of trust. While those familiar with the details of Communion polity or academic jargon may easily access the Dar documents through the footnote provided, the relevant sections need to be included in the appendix to this document, given their importance in articulating these matters.

St. Andrew's Text:

(3.2.6) to have in mind that our bonds of affection and the love of Christ compel us always to seek the highest possible degree of communion.

Suggested Revision and Reasoning:

This revision is suggested simply to make consistent and explicit, our bonds of both affection and accountability.

(3.2.6) to have in mind that our bonds of affection and accountability, and the love of Christ compel us always to seek the highest possible degree of communion.