

Towards an Understanding of the Purpose and Scope of the Primates' Meeting
A Working Document
Approved by the Primates Meeting January 29, 2011

1 **Purpose**

2 The Primates' Meeting is a gathering of the Primates and Moderators of the Churches of the
3 Anglican Communion convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

4 Archbishop Coggan was the first to call for "meetings of the Primates of the Communion reasonably
5 often, for leisurely thought, prayer and deep consultation ..." (Lambeth Conference 1978, Report, p
6 123.)

7 *The Windsor Report* expressed the hope that the Primates' Meeting 'should be a primary forum for
8 the strengthening of the mutual life of the provinces, and be respected by individual primates and
9 the provinces they lead as an instrument through which new developments may be honestly
10 addressed'. (*The Windsor Report*, Appendix One, paragraph 5)

11 By God's grace we strive to express that unity in diversity which is the Spirit's work among the
12 Churches of the Communion and the community of Primates. That unity is expressed and fostered
13 by our study of the Scriptures together, prayer and the celebration of the Eucharist. We look to the
14 Spirit to nurture our bonds of affection as we endeavour to work together with the other
15 Instruments of Communion in the service of the Gospel.

16 **Our Life and Work Together**

17 The Primates:

- 18 - bring the realities, expectations and hopes of the context from which they come, thus
- 19 representing the local to the global
- 20 - learn the realities, expectations and hopes of other contexts, and
- 21 - carry home and interpret the global to the local

22 The Primates together:

- 23 - give leadership and support as the Communion lives out the Marks of Mission¹
- 24 - seek continuity and coherence in faith, order, and ethics
- 25 - provide a focal point of unity
- 26 - address pressing issues affecting the life of the Communion
- 27 - provide guidance for the Communion
- 28 - address pressing issues of global concern
- 29 - are advocates for social justice in these situations

¹ The Five Marks of Mission were summarized in the *Missio* report of 1999 and reiterated in The Anglican Covenant. They are:

To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
To respond to human need by loving service
To seek to transform unjust structures of society
To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

30 We endeavour to accomplish our work through:

- 31 - prayer
- 32 - fellowship
- 33 - study and reflection
- 34 - caring for one another as Primates and offering mutual support
- 35 - taking counsel with one another and with the Archbishop of Canterbury
- 36 - relationship building at regular meetings
- 37 - being spiritually aware
- 38 - being collegial
- 39 - being consultative
- 40 - acknowledging diversity and giving space for difference
- 41 - being open to the prophetic Spirit
- 42 - exercising authority in a way that emerges from consensus-building and mutual discernment
- 43 leading to persuasive wisdom
- 44 - the work of the Primates' Standing Committee²

45 **Commitment**

46 In our common life in Christ we are passionately committed to journeying together in honest
47 conversation. In faith, hope, and love we seek to build our Communion and further the reign of God.

² The Primates Meeting of 2011 approved a document entitled 'Standing Committee' which outlined the role and purpose of the Primates' Standing Committee.