

# THE Anglican COMMUNION Covenant

## *The Third (Ridley Cambridge) Draft*

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### Introduction to the Covenant Text

*“This life is revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us – we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have communion with us; and truly our communion is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. These things we write so that our joy may be complete.” (1 John 1.2-4).*

1. God has called us into communion in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1.9). This communion has been “revealed to us” by the Son as being the very divine life of God the Trinity. What is the life revealed to us? St John makes it clear that the communion of life in the Church participates in the communion which is the divine life itself, the life of the Trinity. This life is not a reality remote from us, but one that has been “seen” and “testified to” by the apostles and their followers: “for in the communion of the Church we share in the divine life”<sup>1</sup>. This life of the One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, shapes and displays itself through the very existence and ordering of the Church.
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 the divine 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 ends of the earth and of creation.
3. We humbly recognize that this calling and gift of communion entails responsibilities for our common life before God as we seek, through grace, to be faithful in our service of God’s purposes for the world. Joined in one universal Church, which is Christ’s Body, spread throughout the earth, we serve his gospel even as we are enabled to be made one across the dividing walls of human sin and estrangement (Eph 2.12-22). The forms of this life in the Church, caught up in the mystery of divine communion, reveal to the hostile and divisive power of the world the “manifold wisdom of God” (Eph 3:9-10). Faithfulness, honesty, gentleness, humility, patience, forgiveness, and love itself, lived out in mutual deference and service (Mk 10.44-45) among the Church’s people and through its ministries, contribute to building up the body of Christ as it grows to maturity (Eph 4.1-16; Col 3.8-17).
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 a particular charism and identity among the many followers and servants of Jesus. We recognise 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. Therefore, we covenant together as churches of this Anglican Communion to be faithful to God’s promises through the historic faith we confess, our common worship, our participation in God’s mission, and the way we live together.
5. To covenant together is not intended to change the character of this Anglican expression of Christian faith. Rather, we recognise the importance of renewing in a solemn way our commitment to one another, and to the common understanding of faith and order we have received, so that the bonds of affection which hold us together may be re-affirmed and intensified. We do this in order to reflect, in our relations with one another, God’s own faithfulness and promises towards us in Christ (2 Cor 1.20-22).

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<sup>1</sup> *The Church of the Triune God*, The Cyprus Statement of the International Commission for Anglican Orthodox Theological Dialogue, 2007, paragraph 1,2.

6. We are a people who live, learn, and pray by and with the Scriptures as God's Word. We seek to adore God in thanks and praise and to make intercession for the needs of people everywhere through common prayer, united across many cultures and languages. We are privileged to share in the mission of the apostles to bring the gospel of Christ to all nations and peoples, not only in words but also in deeds of compassion and justice that witness to God's character and the triumph of Christ over sin and death. We give ourselves as servants of a greater unity among the divided Christians of the world. May the Lord help us to "preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4.5).
7. Our faith embodies a coherent testimony to what we have received from God's Word and the Church's long-standing witness. Our life together reflects the blessings of God (even as it exposes our failures in faith, hope and love) in growing our Communion into a truly global family. The mission we pursue aims at serving the great promises of God in Christ that embrace the peoples and the world God so loves. This mission is carried out in shared responsibility and stewardship of resources, and in interdependence among ourselves and with the wider Church.
8. Our prayer is that God will redeem our struggles and weakness, renew and enrich our common life and use the Anglican Communion to witness effectively in all the world, working with all people of good will, to the new life and hope found in Christ Jesus.

## The Anglican Communion Covenant

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### Preamble

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We, as Churches of the Anglican Communion, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, solemnly covenant together in these following affirmations and commitments. As people of God, drawn from "every nation, tribe, people and language" (Rev 7.9), we do this in order to proclaim more effectively in our different contexts the grace of God revealed in the gospel, to offer God's love in responding to the needs of the world, to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and together with all God's people to attain the full stature of Christ (Eph 4.3,13).

### Section One: Our Inheritance of Faith

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#### 1.1 Each Church affirms:

(1.1.1) its communion in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(1.1.2) the catholic and apostolic faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation<sup>2</sup>. The historic formularies of the Church of England<sup>3</sup>, forged in the context of the European Reformation and acknowledged and appropriated in various ways in the Anglican Communion, bear authentic witness to this faith.

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. The Preface to the Declaration of Assent, Canon C15 of the Church of England.

<sup>3</sup> The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons

(1.1.3) the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as containing all things necessary for salvation and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith<sup>4</sup>.

(1.1.4) the Apostles' Creed, as the baptismal symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith<sup>5</sup>.

(1.1.5) the two sacraments ordained by Christ himself – Baptism and the Supper of the Lord – ministered with the unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and of the elements ordained by him<sup>6</sup>.

(1.1.6) 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<sup>7</sup>.

(1.1.7) the shared patterns of our common prayer and liturgy which form, sustain and nourish our worship of God and our faith and life together.

(1.1.8) its participation in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God, and that this mission is shared with other Churches and traditions beyond this Covenant.

## **1.2 In living out this inheritance of faith together in varying contexts, each Church, reliant on the Holy Spirit, commits itself:**

(1.2.1) to teach and act in continuity and consonance with Scripture and the catholic and apostolic faith, order and tradition, as received by the Churches of the Anglican Communion, mindful of the common councils of the Communion and our ecumenical agreements.

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

(1.2.3) to witness, in this reasoning, to the renewal of humanity and the whole created order through the death and resurrection of Christ, and to reflect the holiness that in consequence God gives to, and requires from, his people.

(1.2.4) to hear, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the Scriptures in our different contexts, informed by the attentive and communal reading of - and costly witness to - the Scriptures by all the faithful, by the teaching of bishops and synods, and by the results of rigorous study by lay and ordained scholars.

(1.2.5) to ensure that biblical texts are received, read and interpreted faithfully, respectfully, comprehensively and coherently, with the expectation that Scripture continues to illuminate and transform the Church and its members, and through them, individuals, cultures and societies.

(1.2.6) to encourage and be open to prophetic and faithful leadership in ministry and mission so as to enable God's people to respond in courageous witness to the power of the gospel in the world.

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<sup>4</sup> The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1886/1888

<sup>5</sup> The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1886/1888

<sup>6</sup> cf. The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1886/1888, The Preface to the Declaration of Assent, Canon C15 of the Church of England.

<sup>7</sup> cf. The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1886/1888

(1.2.7) to seek in all things to uphold the solemn obligation to nurture and sustain eucharistic communion, in accordance with existing canonical disciplines, as we strive under God for the fuller realisation of the communion of all Christians.

(1.2.8) to pursue a common pilgrimage with the whole Body of Christ continually to discern the fullness of truth into which the Spirit leads us, that peoples from all nations may be set free to receive new and abundant life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Section Two: The Life We Share with Others: Our Anglican Vocation**

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### **2.1 Each Church affirms:**

(2.1.1) communion as a gift of God given so that God's people from east and west, north and south, may together declare the glory of the Lord and be both a sign of God's reign in the Holy Spirit and the first fruits in the world of God's redemption in Christ.

(2.1.2) its gratitude for God's gracious providence extended to us down through the ages: our origins in the Church of the apostles; the ancient common traditions; the rich history of the Church in Britain and Ireland reshaped by the Reformation, and our growth into a global communion through the expanding missionary work of the Church; our ongoing refashioning by the Holy Spirit through the gifts and sacrificial witness of Anglicans from around the world; and our summons into a more fully developed communion life.

(2.1.3) in humility our call to constant repentance: for our failures in exercising patience and charity and in recognizing Christ in one another; our misuse of God's gracious gifts; our failure to heed God's call to serve; and our exploitation one of another.

(2.1.4) the imperative of God's mission into which the Communion is called, a vocation and blessing in which each Church is joined with others in Christ in the work of establishing God's reign. As the Communion continues to develop into a worldwide family of interdependent churches, we embrace challenges and opportunities for mission at local, regional, and international levels. In this, we cherish our mission heritage as offering Anglicans distinctive opportunities for mission collaboration.

(2.1.5) that our common mission is a mission shared with other Churches and traditions beyond this Covenant. We embrace opportunities for the discovery of the life of the whole gospel, and for reconciliation and shared mission with the Church throughout the world. We affirm the ecumenical vocation of Anglicanism to the full visible unity of the Church in accordance with Christ's prayer that "all may be one". It is with all the saints in every place and time that we will comprehend the fuller dimensions of Christ's redemptive and immeasurable love.

### **2.2 In recognition of these affirmations, each Church, reliant on the Holy Spirit, commits itself:**

(2.2.1) to answer God's call to undertake evangelisation and to share in the healing and reconciling mission "for our blessed but broken, hurting and fallen world"<sup>8</sup>, and, with mutual accountability, to share our God-given spiritual and material resources in this task.

(2.2.2) to undertake in this mission, which is the mission of God in Christ<sup>9</sup>:

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<sup>8</sup> IASCOME Report, ACC-13

<sup>9</sup> The five Marks of Mission are set out in the MISSIO Report of 1999, building on work at ACC-6 and ACC-8.

- (2.2.2.a) “to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God” and to bring all to repentance and faith;
- (2.2.2.b) “to teach, baptize and nurture new believers”, making disciples of all nations (Mt 28.19) through the quickening power of the Holy Spirit<sup>10</sup> and drawing them into the one Body of Christ whose faith, calling and hope are one in the Lord (Eph 4.4-6);
- (2.2.2.c) “to respond to human need by loving service”, disclosing God’s reign through humble ministry to those most needy (Mk 10.42-45; Mt 18.4; 25.31-45);
- (2.2.2.d) “to seek to transform unjust structures of society” as the Church stands vigilantly with Christ proclaiming both judgment and salvation to the nations of the world<sup>11</sup>, and manifesting through our actions on behalf of God’s righteousness the Spirit’s transfiguring power<sup>12</sup>;
- (2.2.2.e) “to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain and renew the life of the earth” as essential aspects of our mission in communion<sup>13</sup>.

(2.2.3) to engage in this mission with humility and an openness to our own ongoing conversion in the face of our unfaithfulness and failures in witness.

(2.2.4) to revive and renew structures for mission which will awaken and challenge the whole people of God to work, pray and give for the spread of the gospel.

(2.2.5) to order its mission in the joyful and reverent worship of God, thankful that in our eucharistic communion “Christ is the source and goal of the unity of the Church and of the renewal of human community”<sup>14</sup>.

## Section Three: Our Unity and Common Life

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### 3.1 Each Church affirms:

(3.1.1) that by our participation in Baptism and Eucharist, we are incorporated into the one body of the Church of Jesus Christ, and called by Christ to pursue all things that make for peace and build up our common life.

(3.1.2) its resolve to live in a Communion of Churches. Each Church, with its bishops in synod, orders and regulates its own affairs and its local responsibility for mission through its own system of government and law and is therefore described as living “in communion with autonomy and accountability”<sup>15</sup>. Trusting in the Holy Spirit, who calls and enables us to dwell in a shared life of common worship and prayer for one another, 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 be conformed together to the mind of Christ. Churches of the Anglican Communion are bound together “not by a central legislative and executive authority, but by mutual loyalty sustained through the common counsel of the bishops in conference”<sup>16</sup> and of the other instruments of Communion.

(3.1.3) the central role of bishops as guardians and teachers of faith, as leaders in mission, and as a visible sign of unity, representing the universal Church to the local, and the local

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<sup>10</sup> *Church as Communion* n26

<sup>11</sup> WCC 1954 Evanston, *Christ the Hope of the World*

<sup>12</sup> Moscow Statement, 43

<sup>13</sup> IARCCUM, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, 118

<sup>14</sup> Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, WCC,

<sup>15</sup> A Letter from Alexandria, the Primates, March 2009

<sup>16</sup> Lambeth Conference 1930

Church to the universal and the local Churches to one another. This ministry is exercised personally, collegially and within and for the eucharistic community. We receive and maintain the historic threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, ordained for service in the Church of God, as they call all the baptised into the mission of Christ.

(3.1.4) the importance of instruments in the Anglican Communion to assist in the discernment, articulation and exercise of our shared faith and common life and mission. The life of communion includes an ongoing engagement with the diverse expressions of apostolic authority, from synods and episcopal councils to local witness, in a way which continually interprets and articulates the common faith of the Church's members (*consensus fidelium*). In addition to the many and varied links which sustain our life together, we acknowledge four particular Instruments at the level of the Anglican Communion which express this co-operative service in the life of communion.

- I. We accord the Archbishop of Canterbury, as the bishop of the See of Canterbury with which Anglicans have historically been in communion, a primacy of honour and respect among the college of bishops in the Anglican Communion as first among equals (*primus inter pares*). As a focus and means of unity, the Archbishop gathers and works with the Lambeth Conference and Primates' Meeting, and presides in the Anglican Consultative Council.
- II. The Lambeth Conference expresses episcopal collegiality worldwide, and brings together the bishops for common worship, counsel, consultation and encouragement in their ministry of guarding the faith and unity of the Communion and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Eph 4.12) and mission.
- III. The Anglican Consultative Council is comprised of lay, clerical and episcopal representatives from our Churches<sup>17</sup>. It facilitates the co-operative work of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, co-ordinates aspects of international Anglican ecumenical and mission work, calls the Churches into mutual responsibility and interdependence, and advises on developing provincial structures<sup>18</sup>.
- IV. The Primates' Meeting is convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury for mutual support, prayer and counsel. The authority that primates bring to the meeting arises from their own positions as the senior bishops of their Provinces, and the fact that they are in conversation with their own Houses of Bishops and located within their own synodical structures<sup>19</sup>. In the Primates' Meeting, the Primates and Moderators are called to work as representatives of their Provinces in collaboration with one another in mission and in doctrinal, moral and pastoral matters that have Communion-wide implications.

It is the responsibility of each Instrument to consult with, respond to, and support each other Instrument and the Churches of the Communion<sup>20</sup>. Each Instrument may initiate and commend a process of discernment and a direction for the Communion and its Churches.

### **3.2 Acknowledging our interdependent life, each Church, reliant on the Holy Spirit, commits itself:**

(3.2.1) to have regard for the common good of the Communion in the exercise of its autonomy, to support the work of the Instruments of Communion with the spiritual and

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<sup>17</sup> Constitution of the ACC, Article 3 and Schedule

<sup>18</sup> cf. the Objects of the ACC are set out in Article 2 of its Constitution.

<sup>19</sup> Report of the Windsor Continuation Group, 69.

<sup>20</sup> cf IATDC, Communion, Conflict and Hope, paragraph 113.

material resources available to it, and to receive their work with a readiness to undertake reflection upon their counsels, and to endeavour to accommodate their recommendations.

(3.2.2) to respect the constitutional autonomy of all of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, while upholding our mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Body of Christ<sup>21</sup>, and the responsibility of each to the Communion as a whole<sup>22</sup>.

(3.2.3) to spend time with openness and patience in matters of theological debate and reflection, to listen, pray and study with one another in order to discern the will of God. Such prayer, study and debate is an essential feature of the life of the Church as it seeks to be led by the Spirit into all truth and to proclaim the gospel afresh in each generation. Some issues, which are perceived as controversial or new when they arise, may well evoke a deeper understanding of the implications of God's revelation to us; others may prove to be distractions or even obstacles to the faith. All such matters therefore need to be tested by shared discernment in the life of the Church.

(3.2.4) to seek a shared mind with other Churches, through the Communion's councils, about matters of common concern, in a way consistent with the Scriptures, the common standards of faith, and the canon laws of our churches. Each Church will undertake wide consultation with the other Churches of the Anglican Communion and with the Instruments and Commissions of the Communion.

(3.2.5) to act with diligence, care and caution in respect of any action which may provoke controversy, which by its intensity, substance or extent could threaten the unity of the Communion and the effectiveness or credibility of its mission.

(3.2.6) in situations of conflict, to participate in mediated conversations, which involve face to face meetings, agreed parameters and a willingness to see such processes through.

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

## **Section Four: Our Covenanted Life Together**

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**Each Church affirms the following procedures, and, reliant on the Holy Spirit, commits itself to their implementation.**

### **4.1 Adoption of the Covenant**

(4.1.1) Each Church adopting this Covenant affirms that it enters into the Covenant as a commitment to relationship in submission to God. Participation in the covenant expresses a loyalty grounded in mutuality that one Church freely offers to other Churches, in whom it recognises the bonds of a common faith and order, a common inheritance in worship, life and mission, and a readiness to live in an interdependent life, but does not represent submission to any external ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

(4.1.2) In adopting the Covenant for itself, each Church recognises in the preceding sections a statement of faith, mission and interdependence of life which is consistent with its own life and with the doctrine and practice of the Christian faith as it has received them. It recognises

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<sup>21</sup> Toronto Congress 1963, and the Ten Principles of Partnership.

<sup>22</sup> cf. the Schedule to the Dar es Salaam Communiqué of the Primates' Meeting, February 2007

these elements as fundamental to the life of the Anglican Communion and to the relationships among the covenanting Churches.

(4.1.3) The Covenant operates to express the common commitments which hold each Church in the relationship of communion one with another. Recognition of, and fidelity to, the text of this Covenant, enables mutual recognition and communion. Nothing in this Covenant of itself shall be deemed to alter any provision of the Constitution and Canons of any Church of the Communion, or to limit its autonomy of governance. Under the terms of this Covenant, no one Church, nor any agency of the Communion, can exercise control or direction over the internal life of any other covenanted Church.

(4.1.4) Every Church of the Anglican Communion, as recognised in accordance with the Constitution of the Anglican Consultative Council, is invited to adopt this Covenant in its life according to its own constitutional procedures. Adoption of the Covenant by a Church does not in itself imply any change to its Constitution and Canons, but implies a recognition of those elements which must be maintained in its own life in order to sustain the relationship of covenanted communion established by this Covenant.

(4.1.5) It shall be open to other Churches to adopt the Covenant. Adoption of this Covenant does not bring any right of recognition by, or membership of, the Instruments of Communion. Such recognition and membership are dependent on the satisfaction of those conditions set out by each of the Instruments. However, adoption of the Covenant by a Church may be accompanied by a formal request to the Instruments for recognition and membership to be acted upon according to each Instrument's procedures.

(4.1.6) This Covenant becomes active for a Church when that Church adopts the Covenant.

## 4.2 The Maintenance of the Covenant and Dispute Resolution

(4.2.1) The Joint Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council and of the Primates' Meeting, or any body that succeeds it, shall have the duty of overseeing the functioning of the Covenant in the life of the Anglican Communion. The Joint Standing Committee may nominate or appoint another committee or commission to assist in carrying out this function and to advise it on questions relating to the Covenant.

(4.2.2) If a question relating to the meaning of the Covenant, or of compatibility to the principles incorporated in it, should arise, the Joint Standing Committee may make a request to any covenanting Church to defer action until the processes set out below have been completed. It shall further take advice from such bodies as it feels appropriate on the nature and relational consequences of the matter and may make a recommendation to be referred for advice to both the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting.

(4.2.3) If a Church refuses to defer a controversial action, the Joint Standing Committee may recommend to any Instrument of Communion relational consequences which specify a provisional limitation of participation in, or suspension from, that Instrument until the completion of the process set out below.

(4.2.4) On the basis of advice received from the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting, the Joint Standing Committee may make a declaration concerning an action or decision of a covenanting Church that such an action or decision is or would be "incompatible with the Covenant". A declaration of incompatibility with the Covenant shall not have any force in the Constitution and Canons of any covenanting Church unless or until it is received by the canonical procedures of the Church in question.

(4.2.5) On the basis of the advice received, the Joint Standing Committee may make recommendations as to relational consequences to the Churches of the Anglican Communion



or to the Instruments of the Communion. These recommendations may address the extent to which the decision of any covenanting Church to continue with an action or decision which has been found to be “incompatible with the Covenant” impairs or limits the communion between that Church and the other Churches of the Communion. It may recommend whether such action or decision should have a consequence for participation in the life of the Communion and its Instruments. It shall be for each Church and each Instrument to determine its own response to such recommendations.

(4.2.6) Each Church undertakes to put into place such mechanisms, agencies or institutions, consistent with its own Constitution and Canons, as can undertake to oversee the maintenance of the affirmations and commitments of the Covenant in the life of that Church, and to relate to the Instruments of Communion on matters pertinent to the Covenant.

(4.2.7) Participation in the processes set out in this section shall be limited to those members of the Instruments of Communion who are representatives of those churches who have adopted the Covenant, or who are still in the process of adoption.

### 4.3 Withdrawing from the Covenant

(4.3.1) Any covenanting Church may decide to withdraw from the Covenant. Although such withdrawal does not imply an automatic withdrawal from the Instruments or a repudiation of its Anglican character, it raises a question relating to the meaning of the Covenant, and of compatibility with the principles incorporated within it, and it triggers the provisions set out in section 4.2.2 above.

### 4.4 The Covenant Text and its amendment

(4.4.1) The Covenant consists of the text set out in this document in the Preamble, Sections One to Four and the Declaration. The Introduction to the Covenant Text, which shall always be annexed to the Covenant text, is not part of the Covenant, but shall be accorded authority in understanding the purpose of the Covenant.

(4.4.2) Any covenanting Church or Instrument of Communion may submit a proposal to the Joint Standing Committee for the amendment of the Covenant. The Joint Standing Committee shall send the proposal to the Anglican Consultative Council, to the Primates’ Meeting and any other body as it may consider appropriate for advice. The Joint Standing Committee shall make a recommendation on the proposal in the light of advice offered, and submit the proposal with any revisions to the constitutional bodies of the covenanting Churches. The amendment is operative when ratified by three quarters of such bodies. The Joint Standing Committee shall adopt a procedure for promulgation of the amendment.

## Our Declaration

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With joy and with firm resolve, we declare our Churches to be partakers in this Anglican Communion Covenant, offering ourselves for fruitful service and binding ourselves more closely in the truth and love of Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory for ever. Amen.

*“Now may the God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do his will, working among us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.” (Hebrews 13.20, 21)*

# The Anglican Communion

## The Ridley Cambridge Report of the Covenant Design Group

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The Covenant Design Group (CDG) met under the chairmanship of the Most Revd Drexel Gomez, former Primate of the Church in the Province of the West Indies, between 29th March and 2nd April, 2009, in Ridley Hall, Cambridge, at the invitation of the Principal, the Revd Canon Andrew Norman, former Representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Covenant Design Group. We are grateful for the warm welcome received.

The main work of the group was to prepare a revised draft for the proposed Anglican Communion Covenant which could be presented to the fourteenth Meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council, and commended to the Provinces for adoption. The CDG now presents the third “Ridley Cambridge” draft for the Anglican Communion Covenant.

This text has been developed in the light of responses received in the twelve month consultation period requested by the Joint Standing Committee since the production of the Saint Andrew’s Draft in February 2008. The CDG has worked with the twenty or so Provincial responses which have been received to the St Andrew’s Draft, and which are listed in *Appendix One* of this Report. We also received a large number of responses from individuals, diocesan synods and other institutions, including ecumenical partners, which were also circulated among the group. All these responses are in the process of being published now on the Anglican Communion website.

The Ridley Cambridge Draft (RCD) of the Covenant text follows the pattern established in the St. Andrew’s Draft, of an Introduction, a Preamble, three Sections (to which a fourth is now added), and a Declaration. “We recognise the importance of renewing in a solemn way our commitment to one another, and to the common understanding of faith and order we have received, so that the bonds of affection which hold us together may be re-affirmed and intensified.”<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction to the Anglican Communion Covenant.

The CDG sees the Introduction as an invitation to readers to set the Covenant text within an understanding of the purpose of the Covenant and its theological foundations.

Questions were raised by some Provinces and bishops at the Lambeth Conference regarding the status of the Introduction: is it to be considered an inherent part of the Covenant itself? What status ought it to be accorded? Those requesting that it be included with the status of the Covenant argued that the Introduction provides a theological foundation for the Covenant. On the other hand, the text is discursive in nature, rather than the propositional form of the Covenant itself, and may provide challenges to some in the formal adoption or ratification processes. Within the RCD,

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<sup>1</sup> Introduction, paragraph 5.

section 4.4.1 clearly delineates what constitutes “The Anglican Communion Covenant,” stating, in particular, that “the Introduction to the Covenant text, which all always be annexed to the Covenant text, is not part of the Covenant, but shall be accorded authority in understanding the purpose of the Covenant.”

The Introduction to the St Andrew’s Draft has been revised only slightly to take account of comments submitted. Closer connections has been drawn among worship, humble service, mutual self-giving, and mission that are at the heart of the divine life into which we have been called.

## The Preamble

The Preamble describes the spirit of our Covenant affirmations and commitments. The Preamble of the St Andrew’s Draft is substantially unchanged.

## Section One: Our Inheritance of Faith

This section describes how “our faith embodies a coherent testimony to what we have received from God’s Word and the Church’s long-standing witness.”<sup>2</sup> Everything which is contained in this Section is drawn from established Anglican texts and thinking.

The Affirmations and Commitments of each section have been refined, and, as each Church makes its commitments, it acknowledges its reliance on the Holy Spirit. Scriptural citations and allusions, when made directly, are not footnoted, but referenced within the body of the text. Footnotes, which are intended only to indicate source material, are given either for direct citations (as in the quotation of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral) or for further reference (as in “Cf. The Preface to the Declaration of Assent...”).

**1.1.2. “historic formularies.”** The St Andrew’s Text conflated texts from the Lambeth Quadrilateral and the Declaration of Assent of the Church of England. We have separated these texts out in the RCD for greater clarity. Reference is given to the historic formularies of the Church of England and their particular context, and new weight is given to the fact that the Book of Common Prayer 1662, the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Ordinal have been appropriated – that is, adapted, inculturated and treated - in different ways across the historical development of the Provinces of the Anglican Communion. Nevertheless, their authentic witness in the context of their original authorship and their guiding authority through history is acknowledged. The various ways in which authentic liturgical renewal and development of polity have related to their sources are also noted.

**1.1.3- 1.1.6. Scripture, creeds, sacraments and the episcopate.** The Lambeth Quadrilateral is now included here in full.

**1.1.7.-1.1.8. Common prayer and liturgy, mission.** The life of common worship is here given its proper emphasis in shaping our common life, alongside the affirmations

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<sup>2</sup> Introduction, paragraph 7

of the Quadrilateral, all of which serve God's mission into which the whole people of God are called.

**1.2 Scripture, theology, teaching, discipleship.** The St. Andrew's Draft has been reworked to give clarity and to allow for a fuller treatment of Christian responsibility in relation to the Scriptures and the catholic tradition. This section addresses the roles of the whole people of God in Bible study, the work of scholars, and the teachings of bishops and synods. The guidance of the Holy Spirit has been emphasized in the discernment of truth. The contextual grounding, and the missional and transformative purpose of our engagement with Scripture has been emphasized. The imperative to nurture and sustain eucharistic communion extends into our ecumenical vocation.

## Section Two: The Life We Share with Others: Our Anglican Vocation

This section elaborates the purpose of our communion together as being for God's mission in the world. It locates our Anglican inheritance and faith, traced back to the apostolic Church, reshaped by the Reformation and continually being renewed by the Holy Spirit. It enumerates the consequences of our missionary life, which although not perfect, have contributed significantly to the emergence of a diverse worldwide family of Churches and which continue to be shaped by different cultures and languages.

The CDG notes the comments that the St Andrew's Draft's treatment of Mission was lighter than the treatment of other sections, and sought to give the section greater weight and substance in the RCD.

The RCD includes a new section 2.1.3 which recognizes the need for humility and repentance where the actions of churches have undermined the credibility of the Church's mission and the integrity of the gospel.

The Five Marks of Mission, originally set out by ACC 6 and 8 and developed in the 1999 Missio Report, are elaborated in the RCD to acknowledge the transformative role of the Holy Spirit in initiating and sustaining the Great Commission.

New sections 2.2.3-2.2.4 incorporate the collective vocation to mission of the whole people of God and the need for humility and accountability in all these endeavours. 2.2.5 locates the Church's mission in its joyful and reverent worship of God and the vision for the unity of all God's people.

## Section 3: Our Unity and Common Life

Section 3 of the RCD has been substantially modified as a result of further deliberation concerning suggestions received from the Provinces and the Lambeth Conference. The affirmations are intended to set out the elements of the life of our Churches which relate to the interdependence generated by communion. The commitments have been reworked to emphasise the mutual obligations which arise from communion, while respecting the autonomy of individual Churches. The CDG commend a helpful summary here: "The Communion guides, each Churches decides."

**3.1.1** has not been changed.

**3.1.2.** The phrase “episcopally led and synodically governed” has been replaced with “with its bishops in synod” for the sake of accuracy. The phrase “autonomous in communion” (from the Windsor Report, para.76) has been replaced with “in communion with autonomy and accountability” from “*A Letter from Alexandria*”, the message from the Primates’ Meeting in March 2009. This phrase adopts suggestions from the Windsor Continuation Group Report (Paragraphs 2 and 55), which were specifically noted by the Archbishop of Canterbury in his Press Briefing on behalf of the Primates at the conclusion of their meeting. The order of the last two sentences has been reversed for greater clarity.

**3.1.3.** The phrase “and the local Churches to one another” has been added to describe a deeper unity and catholicity signified by the bishops.

**3.1.4** A new sentence has been added in the opening paragraph to locate the work of the Instruments of Communion within the larger apostolic authority of the whole people of God as it continually interprets and articulates the Christian faith. Following the descriptions of the Instruments of Communion, a final sentence has been appended, drawing on language from the IATDC’s Report “*Communion, Conflict, and Hope*” (paragraph 113), to clarify the relationship of the Instruments to one another.

The descriptions of the Instruments of Communion have also been modified in some cases. With respect to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the RCD clarifies his significance “as the bishop of the See of Canterbury, with which Anglicans have historically been in communion.” The Lambeth Conference description has been slightly revised for the sake of accuracy. The description of the Anglican Consultative Council is unchanged in this draft. A sentence has been added to the description of the Primates’ Meeting to clarify the phrase “with its bishops in synod” used in 3.1.2 and elsewhere in the RCD.

**3.2.1** The paragraph has been modified to express more clearly the support offered by the Churches for the Instruments of Communion and the reception of their work.

**3.2.2** and **3.2.3** are substantially unchanged in this draft.

**3.2.4** has been reworded and combined with earlier language (3.2.5.a of the St Andrew’s Draft) to increase its accuracy and to clarify, by restating in other words, some of the terms which appeared unclear in the St Andrew’s Draft.

**3.2.5** was reworked substantially. In its present form, it is meant to provide a standard or test by which a Church could anticipate when it ought to act with caution, or avoid taking any action, in “gracious restraint” (*cf Primates, Alexandria, 2009*).

**3.2.6** improves 3.2.5.c of the St Andrew’s Draft by calling attention to the usefulness of mediated conversations, listing the basic components of effective mediation, and requiring Churches in situations of conflict to address one another directly.

3.2.7 is substantially unchanged from the older 3.2.6. It is placed last to emphasize the goal set out in the 1988 Lambeth Conference - “the highest degree of communion possible” as the aspiration that motivates all the commitments preceding it.

## Section Four: Our Covenanted Life Together

This is a completely new section for the covenant text addressing the matter of joining, participating in and leaving the covenant, and resolving matters of dispute. The Nassau Draft provided that the Primates’ Meeting should act as a body which could respond to controversy in the Communion. Matters of serious dispute could be submitted to them, and they would give guidance and direction (6.5). A provision was included that in extreme circumstances Churches would be recognised as having “relinquished for themselves the force and meaning of the Covenant’s purpose” (6.6), in a way which implied that such a relinquishment would be understood as fracturing or impairing communion, and leading into a period which would have to seek “restoration and renewal”. The provisions of these sections were an attempt to describe how the Communion was actually living its life at the time, rather than to invent new ways forward, knowing that the draft would be tested in consultation.

These proposals in the Nassau Draft were widely criticised. There were two grounds. First, many responses indicated that there was great unhappiness with the idea that the Primates’ Meeting should become formally the body within the Communion which could give final direction on a matter. The proposals appeared to create a centralised authority located with the Primates, which overrode Provincial autonomy, a much cherished concept. Secondly, it was felt to be too punitive in its construction, in that the provisions were oriented towards possible exclusion.

A further criticism was also voiced. It was felt that the procedures set out in Section 6 of the Nassau Draft were not sufficiently clear. Since any elaboration of principles would be likely to be lengthy and complicated, it was also felt that such language might be incompatible with the aspirational and relational language of the Covenant. It was therefore proposed (in the Primates’ Meeting in Dar es Salaam) that it might be appropriate to develop a more detailed set of procedures in an appendix to the Covenant.

In the St. Andrew’s Draft, there was an attempt to develop a more balanced and therefore complicated procedure. The relational processes of arbitration in the Nassau draft were repeated (3.2.1-3.2.5.c), but now the autonomy of the Churches was more explicitly respected. The Instruments of Communion could not give “direction”, but they could make a “request”. A refusal to accept the request might be understood, but not necessarily so, as a “relinquishment” of the Covenant. The CDG also developed an initial draft for an Appendix. This set out lengthy procedures for the handling of disputes, and, mindful of the criticism of the Nassau Draft that placed the Primates’ Meeting in the role of arbitrator, the Appendix placed much more emphasis on the work of the Anglican Consultative Council. The Appendix sought to incorporate established principles of natural justice into the process.

The general feeling was that the St Andrew’s Draft was an improvement. However, it still drew substantial criticism, both from Provincial responses, and at the Lambeth Conference. If the role of the Primates’ Meeting in the Nassau Draft has been

criticised as too curial, then the role now given to the ACC was considered beyond their capacity as a consultative body. The detailed rules of the Appendix were felt to be too juridical and complex in their approach. Within the St Andrew's Text, the concept of "relinquishment" and what it might mean was felt to be too unclear, and still too oriented towards punishment. The status of the Appendix was felt to be uncertain, and its relationship to the Covenant text unclear.

In the Lambeth Commentary, we set out some of our thinking in response to these criticisms. In the first place, we indicated that the CDG was inclined towards the development of a new Section Four of the Covenant which would include the sort of material needed. It would address questions of how to join as well as how to leave the Covenant. It could offer a system of dispute resolution, which respected the autonomy of the Churches. It could indicate who would be responsible for the maintenance of the Covenant, and even floated the idea of a "Covenant Commission" in the life of the Communion.

In Section Four of the RCD we have attempted to meet these criteria. However, there is one criterion which is even more fundamental. It is clear that one of the main fears attached to the idea of a Covenant is that it would limit Provincial autonomy. In the responses, this fear worked itself out in two directions. In the first place, there was substantial resistance to the idea that there should be any development of a body which could be seen to be exercising universal jurisdiction in Anglican polity. Anglicans wished to keep the autonomy of their Churches. Secondly, it became clear that the processes of adoption of the Covenant would be immensely complicated if the Covenant were seen to interfere with or to necessitate a change to the Constitution and Canons of any Province. The surrender of any legislative autonomy would in itself prove a stumbling block to the implementation of Covenant.

Section Four of the RCD is therefore constructed on the fundamental principle of the constitutional autonomy of each Church. The Covenant of itself cannot amend or override the Constitution and Canons of any Province. The Instruments of Communion cannot intervene in any jurisdictional way in the internal life of any of the Anglican Churches. The Covenant can only speak to the relationship between the Churches, and of the relational consequences of internal autonomous actions by a Church.

The draft text of Section Four therefore explicitly reaffirms that the Covenant and the Instruments of Communion of themselves do not impose or have any jurisdiction or authority to alter the internal governance of any Church of the Communion. Such a limitation on the Covenant undertakings is repeated in the latter parts of 4.1.1, 4.1.3 and 4.1.4. The Covenant is not intended to alter the Constitution and Canons of any of the Churches; it does not give any power to any Communion body to intervene in a Church's life.

However, the RCD also acknowledges that if any Church of the Communion chooses to exercise its autonomy in a way which lessens the basis on which communion is built - mutual recognition of faith and order, of vocation and a readiness to live in interdependence - then other Churches may wish to respond in a way which demonstrates how the bonds of affection and communion have been diminished by that action.

Section Four seeks to provide a way in which the response of the Communion may be evaluated, harmonised and regulated. It does not provide a system which undermines the autonomy of the Churches. There is no power to direct, either on the matter which may be causing offence, nor the nature of the response - that is left firmly within the sphere of a Church's autonomy. It does however provide a mechanism by which the response of the Communion to a controversial action may be considered, moderated, co-ordinated and handled with patience and care. Since there were objections to the Primates' Meeting and the ACC exercising this sort of role independently, the RCD gives it to them both, with the Joint Standing Committee acting in the role of co-ordinator, and as the body which is charged with overseeing the maintenance of covenanted life.

The concept of "relinquishment" has been replaced with the possibility of a determination that a controverted action is "incompatible with the Covenant". Both this determination and the recommendation of how this action may impair or limit the expression of communion and entail relational consequences is referred back to the Churches, or to any Instrument, so that it can make its own decision.

By offering this Section, the CDG seeks to address the responses which wished to preserve the autonomy of the Churches, and yet give real substance to the nature of the commitments made in the Covenant. Section Four explicitly leaves the Constitutions and Canons of the Provinces untouched, and acknowledges the autonomy of the Churches to govern the internal affairs of the Province. But while it respects the juridical category of "autonomy", it also emphasises the relational and theological category of "communion". It provides a robust system by which an action can be determined to have a destructive impact on the common life and witness of the Communion, and an ordered way to assess the relational consequences which such an action may have.

The CDG notes that there is a potential problem as the life of covenanting Churches develops, as more Churches adopt the Covenant. There may be members of the Instruments of Communion who represent a Church that has not adopted the Covenant, and there would be an increasingly anomalous situation as the Covenant becomes active and forceful in the life of the Churches which have adopted it. A short clause (4.2.7) limits participation in the arbitration processes of the Covenant to representatives of Churches who have either adopted or who are in the process of adopting the Covenant, but there will in time be a question of how both covenanting and non-covenanting Churches participate together in the life of the Instruments of Communion. At the moment, the Covenant text provides that these matters are uncoupled (see 4.1.5 and 4.3.1), but the CDG note that such matters may become the subject of agreed conventions alongside the Covenant.

Finally, the section also makes provision for the amendment of the Covenant. We felt that a fairly high threshold (the consent of three quarters of covenanting Churches) was required for any change, given the profoundly important nature of the affirmations and commitments involved.



## Conclusion

The CDG are pleased to be able to commend their work to the Communion. We have laboured to produce the best possible draft which we can commend together to serve the needs of the Communion at this juncture in its life. We offer this work in the hope that it will strengthen the interdependent life of the Churches of the Communion, freeing them for more effective mission and witness to the gift of Christ in the gospel.

## The Covenant Design Group

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*Cambridge, 2nd April, 2009*

## Appendix One

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### *Provinces submitting responses to the St Andrew's Report and Draft*

Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia	Nigeria
Australia	North India
Brazil	Scotland
Burundi	South East Asia
Canada	Sudan
England	Uganda
Hong Kong	USA
Indian Ocean	Wales
Ireland	West Africa
Japan	West Indies
Korea	

<b>PROVINCIAL RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ON SAINT ANDREW'S DRAFT ANGLICAN COVENANT</b>			
<i>PROVINCE</i>	<i>IN PRINCIPLE RESPONSE TO COVENANT PROVESS</i>	<i>PROCESS OF ADOPTION AND TIME-FRAME</i>	<i>NEED FOR CHANGE IN SAD TEXT</i>
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND	Yes (qualified)	2-4 years, depending on method (Constitution, Provincial resolution, diocesan level)	wording in Section 3 is key; Appendix is unacceptable
AUSTRALIA	Yes to continued process; not yet formal "in principle"	adoption by resolution of General Synod most likely route; does not change law of ACA	Prefers advisory, aspirational, and relational language; wants greater precision
BRAZIL	No	n/a	anti-Anglican and contrary to the needs of the age
BURUNDI	Yes	via HoBps, after diocesan and provincial synods; within a year?	greater precision in some language; more effective conflict resolution; joining and amending
CANADA	recommended Yes	If subordination of constitution, requires amendment to Principles, lengthy process. Limiting autonomy, or about relationship, simple resolution	precision of language; greater emphasis on some concepts; relations with ecumenical /interfaith partners; amendments; timeline; include Introduction
ENGLAND	Yes, to engage positively; awaits final text; promises to follow through	1.5 to 2 years; by resolution of Gen. Synod; possibly involves separate actions by houses of Synod; possibly involves separate actions by majority of dioceses	no "essential" impediments; include Introduction; clarity on certain matters; Instruments; joining and leaving; ecumenical implications
HONG KONG	Yes, to progress, process, and realization of Cov.	no comment	no comment
INDIAN OCEAN	Yes (passionate)	no comment	no comment
IRELAND	Yes to process and goal; awaits final text	1 yr; General Synod via resolution	need to focus on conciliation and mediation; need for consequences, but not too detailed
JAPAN	Yes	HoBps; then to Synod	Concern of juridical focus; need to encourage listening amid differences
KOREA	No	n/a	concern over loss of local and contextual autonomy

NIGERIA	highly qualified Yes	no comment	ineffective and slow processes for dealing with conflict and threats to faith; too much responsibility given to Canterbury; need to increase authority of Primates' Mtg
NORTH INDIA	No, on constitutional grounds; HoBps had originally recommended "yes".	n/a	Believes Cov. would contradict Constitutional framework of autonomy from "external church or society".
SCOTLAND	Yes, only to participation in "discussions regarding the future shape of the Anglican Communion"; no comment on "Covenant" concept".	1-2 years; involves Faith and Order Board; General Synod; perhaps 2/3 votes by orders at two Synods.	concern of language about "covenant"; too much power to Instruments; effectiveness; too rushed
SOUTHEAST ASIA	Yes	no comment	need for clear and effective means of addressing conflict and disputes over doctrine and witness
SUDAN	Yes to process; awaits final text	Synod (with Prov. Stdg Com.), which meets every 5 years	concern over legalism and over complicated, expensive and prolonged conflict resolution processes
UGANDA	Yes, to process and need	2-3 years, via Provincial Assembly and diocesan synod; constitutional change	Needs greater emphasis on auth. of Scripture, historic formularies; needs more effective enforcement processes; clarification on episcopal/synodal gov't; concern over role of Canterbury.
USA	Yes, to process; awaits final text	3-6 years; via General Convention; depends is constitutional change needed	communion theology (& other theological concepts) is too determinative; would like greater diversity; juridical processes too extensive

WALES	Yes to process; diverse views about content and goals of any covenant	Via bill in Governing Body, requiring 2/3 in each house	wants a more “generous” document; wants greater balance of unity and freedom; ways to include and encourage development of doctrine; clarifications over some theological concepts and language part. with respect to authority and Instruments; concern over limitation of autonomy
WEST AFRICA	Yes	Provincial Synod; uncertain time-frame	Needs more robust section on mission; more emphasis on worship
WEST INDIES	Yes (strong)	3 years; via Provincial Synod, with Bishops and St. Com. advising	Introduction should be part of Cov.; clarify Instruments; greater emphasis on evangelism and worship in mission; concern over place of Formularies; need for clear consequences include. “diminishment of status”

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