

**DIOCESE OF GLASGOW and GALLOWAY**  
**SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

Scottish Charity no SC013925

**NOTE OF MEETING TO DISCUSS RIDLEY DRAFT OF ANGLICAN COVENANT**

held at St Bride's, Hyndland on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2009

**Present:** The Dean, Revd Canon James Milne (Hyndland)

Revd Dr Andrew Adam, (Glasgow University), Revd David Cook (Helensburgh), Mrs Anthea Clarke (Ayr), Mrs Marie Ferrari (Hillington), Mr Kennedy Fraser (Bishopbriggs), Mrs Margaret Gascoigne (Cumbernauld), Revd Sally Gorton (Alexandria), Mr Malcolm Green (St Silas), Miss Trudy Hill (East End), Very Revd Kelvin Holdsworth (Cathedral), Mr Richard Horrell (Helensburgh), Mrs Anne Jones (Cathedral), Mrs Margaret MacLeod (Knightswood), Mrs Betty Matheson (Kilmarnock), Revd David McCarthy (Kelvinside), Revd Lukas Njenga (Heart for the City), Revd Donald Orr (Johnstone/Renfrew), Revd Judy Page (Paisley), Revd Andrew Richardson (East End), Mr George Taggart (King's Park), Miss Glennis Taverner (Lenzie), Revd Canon Nicholas Taylor (Clarkston), Mrs Margaret Williams (Dalry), Mrs Gill Young (Cathedral)  
Diocesan Secretary.

**Written submissions** had been received from : Revd Canon Nicholas Taylor (Clarkston), Bridge of Weir Vestry, Revd Eamonn Rodgers (Pollokshields), Revd John Martin (Gatehouse), and Revd David McCarthy (Kelvinside) writing on behalf himself, Revd Canon Philip Noble (Prestwick) and 4 other clergy from outwith the Diocese. These were made available to the meeting, and are appended, as is a letter subsequently received from Dr Malcolm Green (Kelvinside)

**The Dean** opened the meeting with prayer, and reminded those present that the purpose of the meeting was to attempt to arrive at a Diocesan response to the Ridley Draft of the Anglican Covenant, as requested by General Synod. Because of the timing it was not possible to achieve an "official" response agreed by Diocesan Synod, so the Provincial Faith & Order Board would accept submissions of this kind, as well as those from individuals. He then invited Revd Canon James Milne, who had been involved in previous Provincial responses, to put the discussion in context, and bring us up to date on progress so far.

*Revd Canon James Milne* distributed a note to that effect, saying that most of the text seemed to have been accepted by the Anglican Consultative Council, but that they had resolved that the latest draft should be sent once again to the Provinces "*to identify issues of unclarity or ambiguity*" in the text of Section 4.

The Dean then read out the recent e-mailed submissions, and invited discussion. The following points and questions were raised:

- The Gene Robinson controversy had threatened the basis of Communion through a lack of sensitivity to other Provinces. The Windsor report had been an attempt to defuse the issue, and had identified the need for criteria for membership of the Anglican Communion, and hence the need for a document of some kind that all could subscribe to. Other issues had subsequently been drawn into the process, and it was being discovered that various practices, with which some might feel uncomfortable, were going on in various places. Perhaps it was a sign that we were no longer prepared to overlook things we didn't like
- There continues to be in the Diocese a general feeling that a Covenant is unwelcome, unwanted, and would create more problems than it solved. We had lived with differences in the past, and continue to do so, on matters such as *filioque*, remarriage after divorce, the nature of the Elements, women priests and bishops, etc, so why should this, a largely cultural rather than doctrinal matter, be any different? It would have the effect of stifling dissent and open discussion, and inhibit responses to revelation in different parts of the

Communion. Our hallmark has always been “unity not uniformity”; this appears to be a move towards uniformity. Under the proposals there was a danger that criticism or dissent would not be tolerated

- The idea of subordinating the SEC to a superior body whether an individual or a sort of curia is anathema. There were already different categories of membership entitling participation at various levels, and arrangements between different Provinces and other denominations depending upon local circumstances, which would be difficult to continue. The present system allowed for a complexity of relationships and therefore compromises and “escape clauses”. For example, while clergy ordained by a female Bishop of the SEC might not be recognised in the Church of England, the Porvoo agreement to which both Provinces subscribe provided a way out.
- It was not clear how membership of the Communion was to be defined: while no new member could be admitted without signing the Covenant, the position of existing members which refused to adopt it was not stated. We appeared to have three options, none of them acceptable –
  - to sign it and put it on one side. A danger of this is that it would appear to give legitimacy to those who would seek to exclude others
  - to keep talking so that nothing changes, but all are engaged in the Communion. This has been pre-empted by some Provinces already breaching the spirit of the Covenant and the agreed moratoria
  - not to take a decision until enough water had run under the bridge for us to see if it is God’s will. This could be seen as self-exclusion, and the consequences would need to be spelt out
- If of the 34 provinces, only 13 had responded to the first draft, and 20 to the second, this brought into question the need for a Covenant when so many Provinces seemed untroubled by the status quo.
- there was a view expressed by two people in the Diocese that the Covenant was a step towards reconciliation and rebuilding of the trust that had been broken - the sexuality issue was merely the “presenting symptom”, covering deeper issues and differences. A Bishop was a Bishop of the whole Church, not just the Diocese or Province, and therefore had to be acceptable to the whole Church. To them the covenant would be welcome.

Since the need for a Covenant had still to gain general credibility within the Diocese, it was not easy to elicit specific feedback on Section 4. The issues arising from it appeared to be much the same as those around the whole concept of the Covenant, raising the same questions such as “who decides?” and “on what authority?”, and if Provinces and Dioceses were already acting unilaterally, what effect were the sanctions referred to in 4.2.3 likely to have?

Gibbon FitzGibbon  
Diocesan Secretary

## The Vestry, St Mary's Church Bridge of Weir

### Notes on the Anglican Covenant

1. We would prefer that our Province should not adopt this or any Covenant. As church members of a Province which by acting independently of the Church of England played a major role in the founding of the Anglican Communion, we believe very strongly that the Anglican Communion consists of a group of churches held together not by formulary but by affection, mutual respect, and a shared tradition.
2. As far as the first 3 sections are concerned, it seems to us that if people want to spend time arguing them, it is a better use of their time than being nasty to each other about sexuality.
3. We are asked to comment particularly on Section 4. "Adoption of the Covenant."
  - i. We are happy to see in Para.4.1.3 that no "agency of the Communion can exercise control or direction over the internal life of any covenanted church".
  - ii. We would like to propose –
    - the omission of everything after "Constitutions and Canons" in 4.1.4
    - the substituting of "monitoring" or "considering" for "overseeing" in 4.2.1
    - the deletion of the rest of 4.2
    - the deletion of 4.3
  - iii. We are particularly unhappy with Para.4.1.4 *Adoption of the Covenant .... 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. We have no reservations about anything in the content of the Covenant, but the acceptance of this sentence with its element of compulsion ("must be maintained") may give rise to schism in future. The Covenant is open to prophetic and faithful leadership (Para.1.2.6.) but prophetic leadership is always uncomfortable and disturbing; it is possible that Churches which are being led in new ways may find themselves formally cut off from their fellow churches instead of continuing in tension and dialogue with them.*
4. We appreciate that the Covenant is an attempt to prevent schism and are aware of the political pressure to incorporate Para. 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 4.2.4 etc. The implications of the Covenant, however, are deeply worrying. Whatever may be the intentions of the Covenant, there can be only one outcome. It will inevitably result in schism. *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. Consciences cannot be forced; a Joint Standing Committee is no more likely to force a change of heart than did burning at the stake. Those convinced that homosexuality is part of the human condition are no more likely to relinquish their views than those who believe it is a deadly sin. Neither the Covenant nor a Joint Standing Committee can reconcile entrenched positions.*
5. We hope that our Province will use every effort, by diplomacy, the exercise of sensitivity and charity, and just low Christian cunning, to keep debate open. If the notion of a Covenant cannot be killed off then let us have a fourth, fourteenth, and a four hundredth draft to consider, discuss, and reconsider.

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6th October 2009

Very Rev Dr Gregor Duncan,  
Episcopal Commissar,  
Diocesan Centre,  
5 St Vincent Place,  
Glasgow G12 DH.

Dear Dr Duncan,

**Anglican Covenant – Ridley Cambridge draft**

I attended today's meeting in St Bride's church and am grateful to yourself and all those who participated in that meeting for the opportunity of hearing the issues discussed. The following is my personal response to the Ridley Cambridge draft of the proposed Anglican Covenant.

I understand the purpose behind the document to be the creation of a mechanism for the resolution of disputes between Provinces of the Anglican Communion. Such a mechanism has been made necessary by the consecration of a homosexual bishop in the Episcopal Church of America, which was opposed on scriptural grounds by a number of priests and churches in the USA who then withdrew themselves from communion with the rest of their Church. Primates of a number of other Anglican Provinces declared their support for the dissidents and in some cases began ordaining priests outwith their own jurisdiction. They then extended their disapproval to include anyone who declined to join them in ostracising the American Church.

The need to examine whether an improved structure can be created to avoid such a situation, or to limit its subsequent damage, seems clear. The issue for us to decide is whether the existing mechanisms are sufficiently flexible and fit for purpose or whether some new structure needs to be created, into which Provinces may opt.

The draft emphasises the autonomy of individual Provinces and the primacy of that Church's own Constitution and Canons. It would therefore seem to rule out such extra-territorial episcopal activity as we have seen in the recent past. On the other hand, it proposes a mechanism to deal with "controversial action" by a Church, but I see no definition of what might constitute such an action or who might require the new mechanism to consider it as such. This may be what has led some people to see the proposed Covenant as effectively a veto on innovation, but all I can see is an

ultimate sanction of expulsion from the Covenant, which presumably would weaken and, if it affected more than one Church, would undermine the Covenant itself. Since almost half of Anglican Provinces have not replied to previous drafts it may be doubted if the Covenant, which will obviously apply only to those Churches which sign up to it, will ever have enough credibility to do its intended job.

The problem I have with the proposed Covenant is that I do not think it will touch the issues it is supposed to resolve. Indeed, I fear that, despite the clear separation by its authors of the Covenant and the Instruments of Communion, the Covenant would be seen by many as dividing sheep from goats and might itself become a symbol of division. In other words, it would make the existing situation worse.

I cannot say whether this is envisaged, or perhaps even desired, by those urging us to support the Covenant, though the letter that was circulated today could be read as clearing the ground for legitimising the support of dissenting clergy in the USA. Like many of those at today's meeting, I am comfortable with Anglican diversity and the mutual respect for differing traditions and attitudes which that involves. I do not want to see our Scottish Episcopal Church unwittingly contributing to a narrowing of that tolerance, which I am afraid would be the likely result of the Covenant in its present form.

The point made – from the other side of the debate – that a bishop of one Province should be acceptable throughout the Communion, is an important one for a consecrating Church to heed, but its counterpart, that recognition of other Churches' bishops should not be unreasonably denied, also applies.

My own church of St Silas has a history which I find instructive in the present situation. After a long and sometimes public disagreement with the way the Eucharistic Liturgy was developing in the Scottish Episcopal Church a number of wealthy Glasgow businessmen built their own church “where the pure and simple services of the Church of England's Prayer Book would be celebrated for all time to come”. That was in 1864. Half a century later the matters which had so exercised them would scarcely have raised an eyebrow, but it took almost a hundred years more for the schism (for that is what it was) to be healed. It would be tragic if the adoption of this Covenant led to a similar split, since such divisions tend to long outlive the issues that gave rise to them.

Yours sincerely,

(Dr) Malcolm R Green

# THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION COVENANT THIRD (RIDLEY CAMBRIDGE) DRAFT

## Some Observations and Reflections

Nicholas Taylor

Rector, St Aidan's, Clarkston (Glasgow & Galloway)

Preliminary Comment: I write with some hesitation, as a newcomer to the SEC and its ministry, and have not been involved in previous stages of the discussions of the proposed Covenant in this Province. However, I have several years' experience both of pastoral ministry and of theological education and ministerial formation in two African Provinces of the Anglican Communion, and have participated there in Synods and other ecclesiastical structures. I therefore believe I may have some familiarity with ways in which many of the issues are perceived in other contexts, and be able to anticipate how the implications of this document for addressing those issues are likely to be understood. I may also be able to reflect helpfully on some "global south" perceptions of relations between Provinces, and in particular with those of the developed world with those in the developing. I therefore offer the following points for consideration.

1. The Draft, particularly Section Two, The Life We Share with Others, seems to be formulated in such broad terms that any Province of the Communion could sign it on the basis of its own interpretation of the provisions.<sup>1</sup> When the majority of Anglicans, including church leaders, use English as a second or third language, ambiguity will inevitably give rise to misunderstanding and further contention. A document with any potential to promote unity and mutual understanding in the Anglican Communion will need to be clearly and precisely formulated, avoiding ambiguity while leaving room for that breadth of diversity which reflects the best of the Anglican tradition, and is of the essence of the catholicity of the Church.<sup>2</sup> This Draft does not adequately identify the fundamentals upon which assent should be essential to Communion, or define the parameters of tolerable diversity in interpreting these. Nor does it recognise that there are issues upon which Christians, and in particular Anglicans, can disagree in good conscience. Furthermore, the Draft does not provide any clear basis, to be unambiguously understood by all parties, upon which particular issues might be identified as "controversial". The procedures outlined in Section Four, Our Covenanted Life Together, are vague and open to manipulation and abuse. These flaws seem to be as much a matter of theological weakness as of political compromise and careless imprecision. This represents a fundamental failure in successive stages of drafting.

2. Section One, Our Inheritance of Faith, is essentially pre-critical in its implied depiction of Scripture and tradition as a monolithic and static corpus. The clear distinction between Scripture and tradition formulated at the Reformation, articulated clearly in the *Articles of Religion*, and exemplified in classical Anglican theologians such as Richard Hooker, remains a fundamental principle upon which Anglican theology is based. While this distinction may be simplistic, and in some ways inadequate, it cannot simply be ignored. Furthermore, Scripture and tradition are both diverse, and the latter in particular contains tensions which cannot be harmonised. Tradition is dynamic, including the interpretation of Scripture in different and changing intellectual and cultural contexts. Uniformity in all matters of doctrine and discipline has never been realised throughout

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<sup>1</sup> This evidently does not exclude others' pronouncing to the contrary, as is clear from the claims of certain conservative evangelicals that ECUSA could not sign the Covenant with integrity, C. R. Seitz & al., "The Anglican Covenant: Shared Discernment Recognized by All", publicised in the *Church Times* (11 Sept 2009), <http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/content.asp?id=81236>. If this group is correct, then the proposed Covenant, and the entire Windsor process, are premised upon the principle that certain elements within the Anglican Communion have a monopoly of the truth of the Gospel, and therefore enjoy the right unilaterally to pronounce upon matters of doctrine and moral teaching without regard for the conscience of others.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *The Nature and Mission of the Church*. WCC Faith and Order Paper 198 (2006), para 16.

Christian history, and cannot be imposed now in a multicultural Communion. This failure to appreciate the theological breadth both of Scripture and of catholic tradition is compounded by a quite fundamental violation of Reformation and Anglican principles in its approach to Scripture. While allowing for the reading of Scripture in a variety of contexts (1.2.4-5), this document nonetheless postulates a monolithic and changeless corpus of tradition, which, in effect, governs the interpretation of Scripture. Not only can catholic tradition not be reduced to the strand thereof favoured by any particular theological tendency in the contemporary Church, but to impose any tradition of interpretation on any or every biblical text is to elevate tradition above Scripture. This is incompatible with the Anglican principle that Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation, cited from the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral at 1.1.3, without any apparent awareness that this derives, in wording as well as in essence, from Article VI. While the *Articles of Religion* have, since 1979, been of historical value rather than canonical authority in the SEC, the principle would nonetheless seem relevant, that “whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man [sic], that it should be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation”. This pertains very directly to the issues which divide the Anglican Communion, and which the Draft singularly fails to address.<sup>3</sup>

3. How the Bible is appropriated and interpreted in the formulation of Anglican doctrine and moral teaching lies at the root of the divisions facing the Communion, which the proposed Covenant is intended to address. The Draft itself sets a poor example in its use of Scripture, with a scattering of quotations which adorn the text but amount to little more than the literary equivalent to sound-bytes. At 1.2.4 reference is made to the reading of Scripture “by all the faithful”, presumably in a naïve expectation of consensus emerging, rather than implying that all possible interpretations are equally valid. On the contrary, the whole tone of this document suggests the contrary, that only those who subscribe to particular interpretations of Scripture are considered “faithful”. There is no recognition of the complexities of the reading process, or of the significance of the diversity of cultural contexts in which Scripture is read.<sup>4</sup> There is undoubted liturgical and theological propriety in claiming that the Bible is definitively read in the Eucharist,<sup>5</sup> but, while the lectionary may be an effective vehicle for expounding the faith through the liturgical year, and relating Scripture to the sacramental life of the Church, the exposition of doctrine and moral teaching, which ought to inform Christian preaching, requires more detailed study than is possible or appropriate in such a context. Furthermore, while it may be elitist, it is nonetheless the case that exegesis of Scripture in order to articulate doctrine and moral teaching with any competence requires the use of linguistic and other critical tools which are neither available nor accessible to most Christians. This includes a significant proportion of Christian leaders, including Anglican bishops.<sup>6</sup> At the most elementary level, the Draft reflects no recognition of the complexity of the translation process, on which all contemporary Christians are heavily dependent in their reading of the Bible. Nor does it recognise the inadequacy of many of the translations currently in circulation,<sup>7</sup> on the basis of which assertions

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<sup>3</sup> I discuss further the selective elevation of tradition above Scripture in “Some Observations on Theological Method, Biblical Interpretation, and Ecclesiastical Politics in current disputes in the Anglican Communion”, *Theology* 111 (2008) 51-58.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *A Treasure in Earthen Vessels*. WCC Faith and Order Paper 182 (1998); R. S. Sugitharajah, *The Bible and the Third World* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001).

<sup>5</sup> R. D. Williams (Archbishop of Canterbury), “The Bible Today: Reading and Hearing”, Larkin Stuart Lecture, Toronto, 2007. Cf. A. A. Bartlett, *A Passionate Balance: The Anglican Tradition* (London: DLT, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Far too frequently, the rudiments of critical scholarship are acquired in the course of obtaining academic qualifications, and only for the purpose of obtaining those qualifications, without impinging on students’ (and often their teachers’) theological, moral, and spiritual reflections, or on their exercise of ministry. An academic qualification serves not as empowerment for ministry, but as a status symbol and the means to preferment in the Church or the secular world.

<sup>7</sup> Quite apart from the use of tendentious paraphrases in much western Christianity, most notably among evangelical fundamentalists, many Anglicans simply do not have access to a reliable translation of the Bible, at least not into their own languages. In many African languages the only Bibles available are translated not from the original Greek and Hebrew texts, but from English, French, or Portuguese translations, and continue to reflect the assumptions of

not only may be, but have been made, as to the “clear meaning of Scripture” on matters of contention within the Anglican Communion. If the reflections of popular piety, however ill-informed, affective, and tendentious, or of church leaders who are not theologically literate, are to be the basis upon which Christian doctrine and moral teaching are to be formulated, this would be the realisation in practice of ultra-deconstructionism. As an academic exercise this may be fascinating to some while exasperating to others, but as a basis for the corporate life and ethos of a community or Communion it would be centrifugal in the extreme. It would, furthermore, be naïve to suppose that “the teaching of bishops and synods” would do more than reflect inherited traditions of interpretation and prevailing popular assumptions about the teaching of Scripture. It is precisely the presumption by some bishops that they alone proclaim the true meaning of Scripture, and therefore have the right to “discipline” others, and impose their views on other dioceses and provinces, that has brought the Anglican Communion to the brink of fragmentation. When their claims are reinforced by an assertion that the Holy Spirit is a substitute for sound learning, not least in the interpretation of Scripture,<sup>8</sup> then the response of this Draft is not merely inadequate, but evasive.

4. The place of critical scholarship in informing Anglican theology and moral teaching needs to be articulated clearly, if “the results of vigorous study” are to ensure that the place of Scripture in expounding the Christian faith, i.e. as the supreme authority in matters of doctrine, is to be upheld. This is not to claim special privileges for individual biblical scholars or other academic theologians, but their distinctive contribution must be recognised and protected. Nor is it to suggest that scholarship is unanimous, or will necessarily and inevitably reach consensus on matters of contention, when interpretation of key texts is likely to remain uncertain in the present state of knowledge. On the contrary, strong disagreements among scholars of impeccable learning and unimpeachable integrity demonstrate the degree of uncertainty there is in the interpretation of many texts in the Bible, including those supposedly directly relevant to issues of contention in the Anglican Communion today. The non-confessional character of much contemporary biblical research has the potential benefit of challenging inherited traditions of interpretation within all Christian denominations.<sup>9</sup> Scholarship must play a role in, at the very least, defining the parameters of interpretation which are compatible with the text, challenging both received traditions of interpretation and the affective readings and reflexive cultural assumptions, not to mention rank ignorance, which inform much use of Scripture in Christian life generally and especially in the politics and polemics of the Anglican Communion today. Scholarship must have a role too in demonstrating the degrees of uncertainty inherent in biblical interpretation, and indicating where theological positions cannot be supported by exegesis alone.<sup>10</sup> Where there is such uncertainty as to the meaning of Scripture, then beliefs, values, and codes of conduct may not be imposed on

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nineteenth and early twentieth century missionaries who were neither philologically trained nor necessarily versed in the Biblical languages or as familiar with the languages and cultures of their converts as they thought.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. H. L. Orombi (Archbishop of Uganda), “What is Anglicanism?”, *First Things* (Aug/Sept 2007), [www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id\\_article=6002](http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id_article=6002).

<sup>9</sup> The Archbishop of Canterbury has stated that any challenge to “the way in which the Church has consistently read the Bible for the last two thousand years [sic]” would require “the most painstaking biblical exegesis and ... wide acceptance of the results within the Communion, with due account taken of the teachings of ecumenical partners also. A major change naturally needs a strong level of consensus and solid theological grounding”, “Communion, Covenant and our Anglican Future”, ACNS 4641 (28 July 2009),

<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2009/7/28/ACNS4641>. While those who advocate change would certainly accept some burden of proof, this position seems unduly to privilege conservative and reactionary positions, and to reward intransigence. Biblical exegesis has already demonstrated quite adequately that received traditions of interpretation of key texts on the particular issue of homosexual relationships may not be as ancient as is sometimes claimed, and that the premises of much exegesis have been, and continue to be, anachronistic and unsound. Cf. R. L. Brawley (ed), *Biblical Ethics and Homosexuality* (Louisville: Westminster, 1996).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. A. K. M. Adam (Episcopal priest now lecturing in Theology & Religious Studies, University of Glasgow), *Faithful Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006); S. W. Need (Dean of St George’s College, Jerusalem), *Paul Today* (Lanham: Cowley, 2007).

individuals or communities, without violation of the principle enshrined in Article VI, which protects freedom of conscience on matters which cannot be proven on the basis of Scripture. For as long as the insights of scholarship are disregarded or wilfully suppressed in some parts of the Anglican Communion, or selectively appropriated to reinforce entrenched positions<sup>11</sup> and otherwise ignored, there is no prospect of the learning process taking place to which all are supposedly committed.

5. Section Three, Our Unity and Common Life, is almost nostalgic in its portrayal of the Instruments of the Communion. It ignores the repudiation by at least one Province (Nigeria) of the symbolic, but nonetheless centripetal, primacy of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and also the establishment of what are effectively alternative instruments, of a redefined Communion, by GAFCON. As there is little secret in the intentions of this latter group to define who is to be included in the proposed Covenant, and on what basis, it is somewhat disturbing that the Draft takes no cognisance of this development, but speaks of “openness and patience” in theological debate and reflection (3.2.3). The Instruments have been wilfully undermined, not only in the boycott of the 2008 Lambeth Conference, but in the establishment of FOCA and of alternative diocesan and provincial structures in North America and potentially elsewhere in the Anglican Communion.

6. Section Four, Our Covenanted Life Together, defines how the proposed Covenant would operate. Subsection 4.2, The Maintenance of the Covenant and Dispute Resolution, in particular is written as though about hypothetical controversies which may arise in the future. It is in fact common knowledge that the Covenant is about a controversy which has already arisen, and that it is about homosexuality, particularly among clergy and especially bishops. Whatever precedents may be set for addressing any future disputes within the Anglican Communion, there needs to be honesty about the single issue morality driving the Covenant process. Furthermore, there need to be questions asked as to whether it is appropriate that relationships within the Anglican Communion be redefined over a single issue, which, despite claims to the contrary,<sup>12</sup> is not a matter of doctrine. There has never been any suggestion, e.g., that these procedures might be invoked against the Diocese of Sydney for tolerating lay and diaconal presidency at the Eucharist, even if this consideration may account in part for the restraint the Archbishop is currently exercising on this issue.<sup>13</sup> The Draft appears to have been written to serve the agenda of those determined to exclude others from the Anglican Communion. While lip-service is paid to the autonomy of member churches (4.1.3), the procedures outlined in 4.2 quite clearly envisage that certain Provinces may be coerced into compliance with the will of others, or be excluded from the Communion. It may be reasonable for the ACC, Primates’ Conference, or other Instrument of the Communion to request a Province to defer implementation of a decision deemed “controversial”, or even to place a moratorium on a decision already taken, but only if there are clear criteria and procedures to be followed in identifying an issue or decision as “controversial”, and if a reasoned theological justification for such a demand is required before any response will be considered by that Instrument. There needs also to be a *bona fide* willingness on the part of those demanding such restraint to engage in rigorous and open-ended theological study of the issues, in equal partnership with those who hold conflicting views. Such willingness to be part of a learning process has hitherto been conspicuously absent in those Provinces seeking to impose their will on other members of the Anglican Communion.

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<sup>11</sup> Selective reference to Old Testament narratives, and superficial comparison between patriarchal societies in the developing world and those reflected in Scripture, was commonly used by earlier generations of African theologians to justify polygyny, cf. S. Dwane, “Polygamy” in T. D. Verryn (ed), *Church and Marriage in Modern Africa* (Pretoria: ERI, 1975); E. Hillman, *Polygamy Reconsidered* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1975); J. S. Mbiti, *Love and Marriage in Africa* (London: Longman, 1973). A similar approach to Scripture was formerly used to justify slavery, J. Priest, *Bible Defence of Slavery* (Glasgow KY, 1853); cf. J. P. Daly, *When Slavery was called Freedom* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004).

<sup>12</sup> Orombi, “What is Anglicanism?”

<sup>13</sup> Cf. N. H. Taylor, *Lay Presidency at the Eucharist?* (London: T & T Clark, 2009), ch. 6.

7. It is envisaged that this Document would itself form the basis upon which an action or decision would be deemed “incompatible with the Covenant”, while all that is contained in the earlier sections are vague platitudes about Scripture and tradition, without any clear conception as to how the authority of Scripture and tradition are to be applied when issues of controversy are being addressed. Still less does this document provide a coherent theological treatment of precisely the issue which has given rise to its conception. Given the unwillingness on the part of conservative figures to move beyond knee-jerk histrionics and uninformed claims about the “clear meaning of Scripture”, and to engage in good faith in an open-ended learning and listening process, this is hardly surprising. That such a process should take place before the powers described in 4.2 are invoked, would seem to be no more than simple justice. A commission of Biblical scholars, drawn from a cross-section of the Anglican Communion, to examine the relevant texts and publish a report or study document substantiating clearly their differences as to the interpretation of key passages, would seem a reasonable start to a genuine learning and listening process. There would undoubtedly be costs involved in bringing together scholars from a variety of geographical and cultural backgrounds, including evangelicals and catholics, liberals and conservatives, from both the developed and the developing worlds. But this would presumably be no more than the costs incurred in gatherings of ecclesiastical politicians to produce the Windsor Report and successive drafts of the proposed Anglican Covenant.

8. While recommending procedures whereby Provinces of the Anglican Communion may be progressively excluded from its Instruments (4.2.2-5), the Draft seems to envisage that schismatic groups could be admitted to the Communion (4.1.5). This presumably refers to precisely those entities which have been formed in North America in particular, with the active encouragement and involvement of Anglican Provinces in other parts of the world. In other words, the agenda is in effect to make the Anglican Communion coterminous with FOCA. This provision could potentially also include the Church of England in South Africa [sic] and the organisation established by the former Bishop Kunonga of Harare, Zimbabwe. If the Anglican Communion is not to be defined by FOCA, then its recognised Instruments will need to regain the initiative in negotiating the tensions within the Communion. At the very least, the same penalty of exclusion from the Covenant of those Provinces which act in “controversial” and “unilateral” ways should be available against those Provinces which have established enclaves within the territory of other Provinces of the Communion. However, the whole principle of forcible exclusion of member Provinces from the Communion is questionable, and needs to be considered with far more care than has been apparent hitherto.

9. The Anglican Communion has evolved its Instruments and relationships within and between Dioceses and Provinces which function on the basis of mutual respect and tolerance, in professed submission to God and acknowledgement of the authority of Scripture. The presumption by the hierarchies of some Provinces that they are competent, in any sense of that word, to judge the doctrine and discipline of others, is fundamentally unAnglican. Similar histrionics about the ordination of women, emanating from much the same sectors within the Communion, were generally regarded as outrageous and embarrassing enough to be ignored,<sup>14</sup> however popular they may have been with conservatives in the northern hemisphere. There is no good reason to suppose that the same would not happen again. It is, furthermore, a fallacy that Anglican provinces in the developing world are vibrant and growing exponentially while those in the developed world are in decline. Nor can they claim to possess any spiritual superiority or moral authority, when embezzlement, nepotism, and other forms of corruption are rife, adultery and sexual violence on the part of clergy are common, and the church is in many places split by feuding, often driven by competition for control of donor funds and other material resources. The Provinces promoting a

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<sup>14</sup> It may be recalled that, at the 1988 Lambeth Conference, a bishop from the south Pacific region described the ordination of women as “letting the devil into the Church.”

homophobic agenda, and seeking to impose the Covenant as a means of imposing their will, and that of sponsors from the North American religious right, can claim no moral high ground. While it may be true that depths of holiness are to be found among Christians in the developing world, insofar as the duration of church services is any indication, and spirituality consists in frequent, lengthy, and often frenzied, forms of prayer, and in the passive acceptance of poverty, disease, and abuse as the will of God, it is to be found almost entirely among lay people, particularly women, seldom among priests, and almost never among bishops. There is no reason for the SEC or other members of the Anglican Communion to be blackmailed by the leadership of certain Provinces, or in any way defensive of its spiritual life. Ultimately, if there is to be exclusion from the Anglican Communion, it should be the self-exclusion of those who refuse to share fellowship and Communion with others, whose Christian vision has led them to a different expression of Anglicanism than their own.

10. Notwithstanding the foregoing paragraphs, I believe it would be useful to take some cognisance of the cultural assumptions which shape the hostile and even violent reactions to homosexuality in the developing world, and to the affirmation of homosexual people and increasing acceptance of their ministry within the Anglican provinces in the developed world. This is not to suggest that attitudes are shaped entirely by socio-cultural context, when clearly there is a great deal of homophobia in Europe and North America, and more acceptance of homosexual relationships in some parts of the developing world than in others. Selective biblical fundamentalism may drive many evangelicals, particularly in Europe, North America, and Australia, but is not as significant a factor elsewhere, where the local culture does not presuppose the privileged status or higher authority of written texts over oral traditions and communications. A response which is framed entirely within a western intellectual and cultural matrix will not be effective in dialogue with Anglicans whose cultural preconceptions are very different. While cultures within any single continent are varied, it is nonetheless possible to generalise on a number of related points: nearly all cultures in the developing world are patriarchal and elevate the family and other social units above their individual members, with the correlative obligation to maintain the honour of the family, wider community, and church. The boundaries between kinship ties and local community relationships are often fluid or indistinct, and analogous patterns of relationships and values pertain in the church as in longer established social networks. In the family, honour is maintained above all through marriage and procreation, so that the family is perpetuated, and numerically strengthened, for the next generation. Homosexual relationships are considered deviant, not so much (if at all) on account of the acts performed, as because they violate these obligations, reflect defiance of patriarchal authority, and therefore shame parents, clan and community elders. When these values are transferred to the Church, individuals are expected to subordinate their desires and ambitions to the needs of the Body, and this generally entails unquestioning obedience to church leaders. Action which causes disruption in the life of the Body, or is deemed to bring shame or dishonour on its leaders, is considered deviant. Within this context it would therefore be considered entirely reasonable to expect that people of homosexual orientation should contract heterosexual marriages and procreate, especially where celibacy is deemed to be deviant. It would also be considered reasonable to expect a person whose relationships and lifestyle are considered unorthodox or controversial to maintain a low profile, and not to seek public acknowledgement or the blessing of the Church on, e.g., homosexual relationships, and not to seek ordination, still less to aspire to preferment in the Church. If the SEC and other Anglican Provinces in the developed world are to engage seriously with those in the developing world, then these cultural presuppositions and values, and the contrary values and patterns of relationship in western society, will need to be appraised theologically. Competing interpretations of Scripture and other theological arguments will not suffice. While some self-critical theological reflection on western individualism in the light of the Gospel would certainly be appropriate, the theological value of the individual needs also to be clearly articulated. Individual rights, including that to aspire to fulfil one's vocation and potential in the ministry of the Church, need to be balanced with commitment and responsibility to Church and

community. For this to be received with any credibility, the principle of subordinating private ambition to the good of the Church, universal and local, would need to be unequivocally affirmed. The nature and limitations of authority in the SEC, particularly as vested in Bishops and Synods, including the principle of accountability, will need to be articulated. The autonomy of the Province will also need to be defended as a matter of ecclesiological principle.

11. The SEC may be one of the smaller Provinces of the Anglican Communion, but it has a depth of theological learning which few, if any, could match. It ought therefore to be possible to articulate a robust defence of the doctrine and discipline of the SEC, without conceding any moral high ground in the Anglican Communion to those who have presumed to claim it. There seems to be no reason for the SEC to accept any reconfiguration of the Instruments of the Communion which could lead to its exclusion from full and equal participation therein.

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**Two e-mails received:**

I find I won't, after all, be able to attend tomorrow's discussion. If I can respond to your invitation to express a view, I'm still very anxious about the implications of Section 4 of the Ridley Draft. Whereas previous versions had spoken of provinces signing up or not signing up, this draft uses the terminology of 'churches'. This might not seem significant in itself, were it not for the fact that ++Rowan, according to recent reports, seems prepared to envisage the possibility of a two-speed Communion. If the word 'churches' is to be taken in its normal and natural meaning, Section 4 would mean that bodies like the Anglican Church in North America, a conservative breakaway organisation, might become the recognised voice of Anglicanism in North America if it signs the Covenant, to the exclusion of the Episcopal Church, if TEC decides not to sign. Even if I'm being over-pessimistic in my interpretation, nothing I have seen in the Ridley draft convinces me that a Covenant is either necessary or desirable.

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Please forgive me because I am not able to attend the meeting on Tuesday 6th. October. My reaction to the Ridley Cambridge draft is that it is a diplomatic document. I feel that it is designed to recognise the independence of the provinces of the Anglican Communion, to formalise, regularise, and civilise the inherited relationships between us, and to discourage any threat to each others' authority. Whilst that is laudable, I would have been encouraged if I had seen something a little more dangerous with a vision, a mission, or even a strategy for the future.

Yours sincerely,  
John Martin.

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7<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Very Reverend Gregor Duncan  
Diocesan Centre  
5 St Vincent Place  
Glasgow G1 2DH

Dear Gregor

We are aware that, following the Anglican Consultative Council meeting, the Ridley Cambridge Draft of the proposed Anglican Covenant has been sent to the Provinces for further discussion.

As church leaders committed to the growth of the Scottish Episcopal Church, we affirm all sections of the proposed Anglican Covenant - The Third (Ridley Cambridge) Draft. We seek unity and mutual accountability in the Anglican Communion and we hope and pray that the Scottish Episcopal Church will affirm all four sections, committing itself to the implementation of the Covenant's procedures. This should preserve the strongest possible links with the majority of churches in the Communion.

Yours in the service of Christ,

(David)

Ian Ferguson (Rector of Trinity, Westhill)  
Ian Hopkins (Rector of St Thomas', Corstorphine)  
David McCarthy (Rector of St Silas', Glasgow)  
Philip Noble (Rector of St Ninian's, Prestwick)  
Dave Richards (Rector of St Paul's & St George's, Edinburgh)  
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