

March 24, 2012

To Rupertsland Anglicans

Dear members of the Body of Christ

We are aware that the Diocese is studying the final version of the Anglican Communion “Covenant”. There have been several deanery meetings, and it appears that further meetings may be scheduled, with a view to bringing recommendations to Diocesan Council and thence to Synod this fall.

We know too of the extensive literature opposing the Covenant that has developed, as for example in the website www.noanglican covenant.com. We have also reviewed the General Synod document in the link below which sets forth serious procedural and doctrinal questions to which there do not appear to be answers at present. Finally, of course we are aware of the reason that this document has been born, but on which the document is entirely silent, namely, the matter of gay and lesbian persons’ rights in regard to marriage, ordination and consecration.

While it is quite appropriate to study new documents that attempt to speak to our faith in relevant and yet historically faithful ways, we do not wish to debate the contents of the Covenant, confusing and unclear though they are. The much more central issue is the assumed need for the Anglican Church of Canada to subscribe to this latter day creed, with its quasi-judicial processes in section three and four.

The best test in regard to the need for such a document is to ask, “What would happen if this document were adopted, and then a real issue came along that promised division among the world-wide Anglican Communion?” Appropriately enough, there was such an issue 35 years ago, namely, the ordination of women.

What would have happened regarding the plan to ordain women when first it was being advocated if the “Covenant” were in place 35 years ago? First, there would be notice given about the plan to ordain women. Then unhappy churches, some of whom still today do not ordain women, would express their discomfort through the world councils such as Lambeth, or the meetings of bishops. Then would come committees, consultations, theological debates and more process. Finally, if the initiating church stuck to its plans, it could be “sanctioned”; thrown out of wider church councils, or even perhaps be declared to be “not in communion”.

It seems to us that this is not an exaggeration. Some parts of our world-wide communion still do not ordain women, let alone consecrate women bishops.

Anglicanism works best when it is allowed to muddle, rather like John Ralston Saul claims Canada works best. Muddling is also an important aspect of listening for the Spirit. We muddle big ideas and changes for a while, often quite a while, but then we move, as in the ordaining of women. We trust and hope that we will get over our

sexuality muddle relatively soon. In the meantime, we don't need the pressure and promised endless process of the Covenant to place a stumbling block in the midst of our muddling.

Each autonomous Anglican Church lives in the midst of cultural and other conditions that profoundly shape its missional response to the gospel call for justice and compassion. It is our central task to search in each time and place for that faithful response, which will differ as we perceive that call. While acknowledging that change can be both painful as well as liberating, we ought not to chain ourselves to seeking agreement across vastly different cultures and contexts before responding to the Spirit's call for justice, compassion and inclusion.

Please give this letter and the document in the attached link your prayerful consideration. If you have not yet done so, please read the Report of the Governance Committee of our National Church at the website below. Other helpful websites are listed as well for further reading. We have attached the letter as a Word doc. file as well for ease of forwarding.

If you wish to join your name to ours in sending this letter to a wider audience, please reply accordingly to this email. You also may wish to know that we have informed the Bishop about our intent, and shared with him this letter.

Yours in faith

Peter Flynn	Tim Sale	Maylanne Maybee	Fletcher Stewart
Bill Duff	Mary Duff	Phil Barnett	Berni Beare
David Pate	Lynn Pate	Geoff Woodcroft	Bob Binding
Karen Binding	Terry Reilly	David Punter	Jamie Howison
Judith Whitmore	Bryan Bjerring	Judith Bjerring	Mary Holmen
John Holmen	Catherine Pate	Brian Crow	Barbara Crow
Lyndon Hutchison-Hounsell		Julie Collings	Tom Collings
Jack Risk	Peter Williams	Peg Williams	Alice Williams
Simon Blaikie	Diana Wilde	Rod Sprange	Gordon Shields
Donna Joy	Ralph Baxter	Eileen Baxter	

["Legal and Constitutional Issues Presented to the Canadian Church by the Proposed Anglican Covenant"](#)

www.thinkinganglicans.org