

January 10, 2010



Final Text of Covenant Released

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— Victor Hugo, French Poet, Novelist

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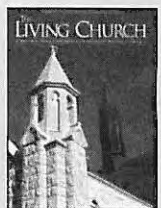
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THE LIVING CHURCH

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THE LIVING CHURCH magazine is published by the Living Church Foundation, Inc. The historic mission of the Living Church Foundation is to promote and support Catholic Anglicanism within the Episcopal Church.

The Covenant Arrives on Schedule

The Archbishop of Canterbury had referred in May 2009 to delivering a completed Anglican Communion Covenant by mid-December.

Yet the document's arrival on Dec. 18, complete with a concise video commentary by Archbishop Rowan Williams (tinyurl.com/CovenantVideo), was a global news story. It stirred a new round of denunciations by liberals who considered it too heavy-handed and by conservatives who considered it too lenient.

The full and complete text of the Covenant is available online at tinyurl.com/AnglicanCovenant. Its release reinforced that the Anglican Communion is a worldwide body that now conducts its theological dialogue not only in synods and conventions but also through global media.

In his commentary, Archbishop Williams characterized the next steps of the Covenant's reception as careful and deliberate, stretching over the next few years.

"It's not going to solve all our problems, it's not going to be a constitution, and it's certainly not going to be a penal code for punishing people who don't comply," he said. "It does try and sort out how we will discern the nature of our disagreement. How important is it? How divisive does it have to be? Is it a Communion-breaking issue that's in question, or is it something we can learn to live with?"

The Covenant took more than three years to take shape. In May 2006, the Joint Standing Committee of the Primates and the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) asked Archbishop Williams to appoint a design group for the document. After three public drafts, and a contentious ACC meeting in May 2009 that asked for revisions to the Covenant's fourth section, the doc-

ument is now ready for provinces to discuss and to adopt or not adopt.

Even before the Covenant's final text was complete, the Global South Anglican Primates Steering Committee announced that the Fourth Anglican Global South to South Encounter will discuss it, and likely affirm it, on April 19-23 in Singapore.

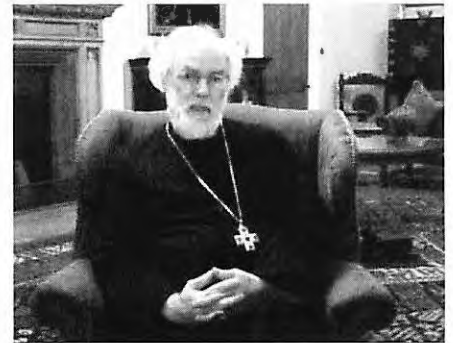
"We aim to affirm the Anglican Covenant as the basis in intensifying the ecclesial life between churches in the Communion, and explore ways churches should stand firm side by side in one spirit and with one mind for the faith of the Gospel of Lord Jesus Christ," the committee said in a statement.

Only a few hours before the Covenant's release, what is now called the Anglican Communion's Standing Committee said that it strongly reaffirmed "the three moratoria proposed by the Windsor Report and the associated request for gracious restraint in respect of actions that endanger the unity of the Anglican Communion by going against the declared view of the Instruments of Communion."

The Standing Committee couched its resolution as a direct response to the election of the Rev. Canon Mary Glasspool, an openly partnered lesbian, as a suffragan bishop for the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles.

Two leaders of the Episcopal Church — Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori and the Rev. Dr. Ian Douglas, bishop-elect of the Diocese of Connecticut — are elected members of the Standing Committee.

The Standing Committee cited Resolution 14.09, approved by the 14th meeting of the ACC in May 2009, as it reaffirmed the Windsor Report's three moratoria (on further consecrations of openly gay or lesbian bishops; on public rites for



Archbishop Williams addressed the Covenant in a video released Dec. 18.

blessing same-sex couples; and on boundary-crossing actions by Anglican bishops or provinces).

Section 4.2.5 of the Covenant says that the Standing Committee "may request a Church to defer a controversial action. If a Church declines to defer such action, the Standing Committee may recommend to any Instrument of Communion relational consequences which may specify a provisional limitation of participation in, or suspension from, that Instrument" until a dispute resolution is completed.

Dr. Douglas: More Discernment Ahead

Completion of the Anglican Communion Covenant's text is simply another step in the Communion's discernment, according to one Episcopal Church leader who serves on the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC).

The Rev. Dr. Ian Douglas, a professor of mission and world Christianity at Episcopal Divinity School and the Bishop-elect of the Diocese of Connecticut, serves on both the ACC and the newly renamed Standing Committee that accepted the final text.

Dr. Douglas said the Standing

Committee's meeting in London did not change how he thinks about the Episcopal Church's relationship with the wider Anglican Communion.

"I do not feel fundamentally different," he told *THE LIVING CHURCH*. "So much of life in the Anglican Communion is continuing to unfold. The Anglican Communion is in the process of becoming. We are learning to live together in new ways.

"We are trying to live into the vision of what it means to be mutually responsible and interdependent," Dr. Douglas said, adding that this vision dates back to the Anglican Congress held in Toronto in 1963.

The question before the Anglican Communion, he said, is whether the Covenant contributes to mutual responsibility and interdependence.

"Each church is going to have to decide that on its own," he said.

Like other members of the Standing Committee, Dr. Douglas declined to answer any questions about the committee's discussions or voting. The Standing Committee functions as a board of trustees for the Anglican Communion Office, he said, and like other such boards, it conducts business privately.

The Episcopal Church's Executive Council elected Dr. Douglas to the Anglican Consultative Council as a representative of the presbyterate. Dr. Douglas said he would need to resign from both Executive Council and the ACC (and thus from the Standing Committee) when it becomes clear that a majority of bishops and standing committees have consented to his election as the Bishop of Connecticut [*TLC*, Nov. 15].

Executive Council could elect him again as a representative of the episcopate, he said. Meanwhile, he is preparing to become a bishop in a



Dr. Douglas

given place at a given time. His consecration service is scheduled for April 17.

"The wonderful thing about the Diocese of Connecticut is that it represents the depth of the Episcopal Church, in that it is genuinely diverse," he said. That diversity encompasses

location, finances, theology, and languages.

"I'm tremendously excited about spending time in all of those various parishes," he said, and asking, "How can we better serve God's mission in the world?"

"Nothing excites me more than being in congregations, local eucharistic communities, and asking the mission question."

Douglas LeBlanc

Dr. Radner: Covenant Part of a Global Shift

The final text of the Anglican Communion Covenant pleased the Rev. Dr. Ephraim Radner, who has served on the document's design group since its inception in 2006. Dr. Radner, an Episcopal priest, is professor of historical theology at Wycliffe College in Toronto, Ontario.

"My sense about it is that they didn't really change anything substantial," he told *THE LIVING CHURCH*, referring to the working group charged with revising the document from its previous iteration as the Ridley Cambridge draft.

"They salvaged what could have been a bad mess from May [2009]," when the Anglican Consultative Council met and, after a chaotic legislative session, ultimately asked for revisions to the document's fourth

section, which proposes how provinces will be accountable to the Anglican Communion as a whole [*TLC*, May 31, 2009].

Because changes to the fourth section did not reflect what Episcopal Church leaders were seeking, Dr. Radner said, the document helps change that province's standing. He described it as being part of a pattern, along with the ecumenical dialogues of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission and the recent meeting of the Archbishop of Canterbury with Pope Benedict XVI.

"You take this, with the restarting of the ARCIC dialogue and what Rowan was engaged in at Rome, and there is a shift going on, and that shift is leaving the Episcopal Church behind," he said. "There's nothing the Episcopal Church can do about it at this point."

While acknowledging the archbishop's explanation that the Covenant is "not going to be a penal code for punishing people who don't comply," Dr. Radner said of Episcopal Church leaders: "They're not going to be able to claim any moral high ground. They've been sidelined."

Those leaders are not being shown the exit, he said, but "they're on a path that's going around the side of the building."

He highlighted Section 4.1.6, which says simply, "This Covenant becomes active for a Church when

that Church adopts the Covenant through the procedures of its own Constitution and Canons."

Conservative provinces in the Global South "ought to be able to go ahead with it," he said about adoption of the Covenant, "whatever problems there are with this or that detail."

He said the document muted,

(Continued on next page)



Dr. Radner

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news

(RADNER, from previous page)

rather than resolved, the question of whether churches may join the Anglican Communion by adopting the Covenant.

The document stipulates that adopting the Covenant occurs at a provincial level. Nevertheless, Dr. Radner said, dioceses may commit themselves to the Covenant's terms, be understood over time as "regional churches," and be invited by the pri-

"My sense about it is that they really didn't change anything substantial."

Dr. Radner

mates to join the Anglican Communion under that identification.

"My sense is that the primates will do so, and it might be sooner rather than later," he said.

Dr. Radner said the Covenant's completion reflects the leadership style of Archbishop Williams.

"I think he really does believe the best way for the Church to make decisions is in open-ended struggle. That really is his ecclesiology," he said. "There is something to be said for his consistency."

Douglas LeBlanc

Revisions Explained

Excerpts from the Covenant Working Group's "Commentary on Revisions to Section 4"

Principles

The guiding principle has been that of minimal revision. However, several areas of Section 4 have required clearer definition and a change of tone in language. In faithfulness to the provincial responses these changes have been incorporated, but with the definite inten-

tion to remain consistent with the work that had already achieved a wide measure of support. This support came across clearly in the majority of the responses received.

Section 4.1

One of the key questions that arose at ACC-14 was the definition of "Churches of the Communion." The Working Group has drafted a new clause 4.1.1 to address this question.

In response to the question, "Who is being invited to adopt the Anglican Communion Covenant?", the Working Group reaffirmed the principles set out in the Lambeth Commentary of September 2008, in its definition of "Churches of the Communion" as those for whom adoption is intended:

In Anglican ecclesiology, there is a creative tension between the understanding of "local Church," which is that portion of God's people gathered around their bishop, usually in the form of a territorial diocese, and "Church" as a term or description for a national or regional ecclesial community, which is bound together by a national character, and/or common liturgical life, governance and canon law. Traditionally, Anglicans have asserted the ecclesial character of the national Church as the privileged unit of ecclesiastical life. The Church of England's very existence was predicated upon such an assumption at the time of the Reformation. Recognised in most cases as "Provinces," these national or regional Churches are the historical bodies through which the life of the Anglican Communion has been expressed, and they are the primary parties for whom the covenant has been designed. If, however, the canons and constitutions of a Province permit, there is no reason why a diocesan synod should not commit itself to the Covenant, thus strengthening its commitment to

the interdependent life of the Communion. (question 11, p. 11)

The Group recognise that any ecclesial body may express commitment to the Covenant. Some may find that the affirmations and commitments of the Anglican Communion Covenant contain helpful guides for interdependent life at other levels and in other contexts than those specific to relations amongst the Member Churches of the Anglican Communion. This sort of endorsement is to be encouraged as contributing to the covenantal life of the Communion.

Section 4.2

The most difficult part of the Covenant text has related to those sections which deal with any disruption in the life of Communion. There remains in some quarters a

lingering feeling that being in communion requires only positive affirmation and encouragement. However, the fact is that not all developments aid and nurture deeper communion. From our recent history it is evident that some developments bring dispute, disruption and tension. The clear majority of responses demonstrated that a section of the Covenant which seeks to provide an ordered way for the Communion to approach disagreement remains a necessary feature of the Covenant.

The Covenant Working Group has taken very seriously the representations of a number of Provinces that this section should avoid a punitive or juridic tone, that it should emphasise relational and communion aspects, and defer to

the dispersed model of authority, which places emphasis on the autonomy of the Churches as final arbiters of maintaining the Communion which their relations constitute. ... [B]ut [the Covenant Working Group] also acknowledges the point made, amongst others, by the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission in their report "Communion, Conflict and Hope," that mutual accountability is a fundamental Communion value which should draw the Churches into a common life.

...
A further question has concerned the "relational consequences" which may follow a declaration of "incompatibility with the covenant." A reality which has to be acknowledged is that if there is

(Continued on page 15)

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Essential Aspects

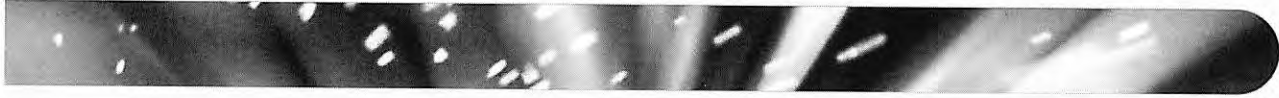
1. The final text of the Covenant is meant by the Covenant Working Group (all of whose members served on the Covenant Design Group) to be taken as a revision of the Ridley draft of last April rather than as a distinct, fourth draft. This may be seen by the fact that they have subtitled this final text “the Ridley Cambridge November text” (see along the top of each page of the final text and also p. 4 of the commentary provided by the working group), and fits with their stated principle of “minimal revision” and “definite intention to remain consistent with the work that had already achieved a wide measure of support.” It also indicates that we may safely presume this final text to have been completed by the Covenant Working Group itself rather than by the Standing Committee, as Canon Kearon’s letter also suggests: that the working group “met in November 2009, considered 18 responses received from the provinces, and revised Section 4 in light of these responses. . . . This text was presented to the Standing Committee, which has now approved it for distribution.”

2. The foregoing is important for several reasons, including that this final text makes “explicit,” as the working group explains in its commentary, “that the Standing Committee derives its authority from its responsibility to the two Instruments of Communion which elect its membership, and on whose behalf it acts. It provides a co-ordinating function for matters to do with Covenant maintenance, supported by relevant expertise (cf. 4.2.2) and in close communication with both the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates’ Meeting, on whose advice it acts (cf. 4.2.6 and 4.2.7).” Thus, where the earlier Ridley text gave to the then Joint Standing Committee “the duty of *overseeing* the functioning of the Covenant” (4.2.1), a word that implies a kind of episcopacy, the final text stipulates that the Standing Committee shall “*monitor* the function-

ing of the Covenant . . . on behalf of the Instruments” (4.2.2; and cf. 4.2.4 and 4.4.2). Given that the Standing Committee will be playing such a central role in the life of the Communion going forward, it is necessary to understand this.

3. The final text now displays in section 4 several vital theological enrichments that, as the Working Group explained, tie the picture of “communion” and its responsibilities more tightly to the previous sections. This may be seen in 4.1.1, in and around the new, one-sentence definition of the Anglican Communion; and especially in 4.2.1, which is constructed from sentences from the former 4.1.3 and 4.1.4 but also adds new language — in particular, two references to “accountability,” a word that did not previously appear anywhere in section 4. Likewise, the Working Group drew attention to the “explicit” (again) addition of 4.2.3: “it is the duty of each covenanting church to seek to live out the commitments of section 3.2.”

4. The final text specifies that “the churches of the Communion” means first and primarily the “fellowship . . . of national or regional churches” presently “recognized” in the Constitution of the ACC (4.1.1 and 4.1.4). It also *defines* these churches, however, as mutually recognizing in one another “the bonds of a common loyalty to Christ expressed through a common faith and order, a shared inheritance in worship, life and mission, and a readiness to live in an interdependent life” (4.1.1). And the latter are now placed within the normative context of the covenantal call itself — “to live more fully into the ecclesial communion and interdependence which is foundational to the churches of the Anglican Communion.” In the event, therefore, that some churches of the Communion choose not to enter into the Covenant, the final text has left plenty of room for the Instruments



of Communion to maneuver, primarily by pointing to the fact that the ACC's schedule of membership may be changed at any time (4.1.5; cf. 4.2.5, 4.2.8, and 4.3.1). And the Working Group's deft "reaffirmation" of the Design Group's Lambeth Commentary of 2008 serves as a crucial resource here as well, in terms of the "creative tension" in Anglican ecclesiology (and they might simply have said Catholic ecclesiology) between *church* in the sense of a diocese and in the sense of "a national or regional ecclesial community."

5. The final text admirably expands the description of the dispute resolution process by referring first of all to the duties of covenantal life in Communion (4.2.3) and then to the initial role of the Standing Committee to "make every effort to facilitate agreement" in the case of matters upon which "a shared mind has not been reached" (4.2.4). Following these steps comes a request by the Standing Committee to a church "to defer a controversial action" and consequent recommendation of "relational consequences" should the church decline due deference (4.2.5). And while this latter material is not new, it is significant that the first action taken by the Standing Committee on Dec. 18, besides approval of the Covenant, was a resolution "strongly reaffirm[ing]" the Windsor Report's moratoria in the face of Canon Glasspool's nomination in Los Angeles, increased same-sex blessings in U.S. and Canadian dioceses, and continued "cross-jurisdictional activity within the Communion." The request for deferred action in these instances has thus now been made, and we may expect that relational consequences — "a provisional limitation of participation in, or suspension from" any or all of the Instruments of Communion — will follow should these actions continue.

Christopher Wells

In the event that some churches of the Communion choose not to enter into the Covenant, the final text has left plenty of room for the Instruments of Communion to maneuver.

Editorial

To Arrive Where We Started

"The Covenant text sets out the basis on which the Anglican family works and prays and lives and hopes," said the Archbishop of Canterbury on Dec. 18, and on reflection one might be struck by the present tense, sustained throughout the sentence. Is it in fact true that our global Anglican family even now "works and prays and lives and hopes" on the basis of a text that we have only had for a matter of days? How is this possible?

On one level Archbishop Williams's claim is clearly false. Now that the Anglican Communion Covenant is complete — the text has been agreed upon and will not, we are told, be amended until at least 2012, at the next meeting of the ACC — it is being disseminated to the provinces of the Communion "for formal consideration for adoption," according to Secretary General Kenneth Kearon. Obviously, then, if the Anglican Communion is to embrace the Covenant, it will do so in the future, yielding "a new kind of relationship," if people "agree to these ways of resolving our conflicts," as the archbishop said.

In another level, however, it's precisely the nature of the proposed innovation that makes the archbishop's choice of verb tense correct, and deeply insightful. If, in an important sense, the Covenant will reorder and reconfigure our Communion, it will do so in a way "that will help us know where we stand together, and help us also intensify our fellowship and trust," as Archbishop Williams says. And "in the long run this will actually help us to become more of a communion — more responsible for each other, presenting to the world a face of mutual understanding, patience, charity and gratitude for one another."

There's a paradox here, rather like that at the heart of the gospel. "I was lost but now I'm found," in the words of the old hymn, but the subject in question, the *I*, remains the same, however transformed and reformed. Similarly, wrap your mind around the notion that "you are not your own" since "you were bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:19-20). What does it mean to find ourselves beyond ourselves — in Jesus and in the Father (see John 6:44) — if not that the Christian life is a process of growth into the fullness of communion with God and one another; a journey into the love of God that transforms — heals and elevates — us and all with whom we share the space of communion? Thus, poetically, "the end of all our

exploring / Will be to arrive where we started / And know the place for the first time."

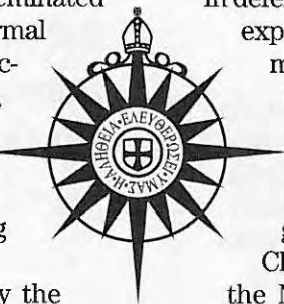
Of course, no one will be forced to embark upon this particular journey. And many, on all sides of the debate — pro and con, "liberal" and "conservative" — doubt whether there will be much interest in adopting the Covenant by most provincial churches on the schedule of the ACC (at whom the covenant will first of all be aimed, at least until ACC-15 in 2012). For his part, Archbishop Williams said that he hopes "it will be adopted by as many provinces as possible," adding that he expects "in the next few years ... to see quite a bit of activity around this."

In defense of the plausibility of the archbishop's expectation, we recall last week's announcement of the "Fourth Anglican Global South to South Encounter" in Singapore in April (tinyurl.com/FourthTrumpet). Organized by the Global South Anglican Primate Steering Committee, the event will be given to the theme "The Gospel of Jesus Christ — Covenant for the People; Light for the Nations." Those gathered will "aim to

affirm the Anglican Covenant as the basis in intensifying the ecclesial life between churches in the Communion." Indeed, so firm is their resolve to affirm the Covenant that "the Steering Committee emphasized that provincial and invited participants should be unequivocally committed to uphold the spirit and intent of the 1998 Lambeth Resolution 1.10 and the proposed Anglican Covenant (full Ridley Draft)."

What will the Episcopal Church do? Of course, many if not most in our church, as well as in the Communion, presume that our church will decline to adopt the Covenant, and that may be true. There is, however, freedom in Christ, and Episcopalians can decide for ourselves whether to accept this mission. THE LIVING CHURCH considers these the minimal criteria of Christian responsibility for discerning God's will in this matter:

1. Take up the Covenant and read it, carefully and prayerfully.
2. Discuss it in your parish and diocese and decide if you can commit yourself to it and endorse it, as the Covenant Working Group has encouraged.
3. Decide if you will support its adoption on the provincial level.



Four Key Questions

By Graham Kings

Interdependence and mutual accountability have always been the key features of the earlier drafts (Nassau, St Andrew's, and Ridley) of the Covenant. It is encouraging that these are still at the heart of the final text.

The working party charged with producing this text, especially focusing on section 4, is to be commended. The final text is profoundly Anglican, consonant with the trajectory of the Windsor Process and, it seems to me, is likely to lead to the majority of provinces of the Anglican Communion adopting the Covenant. In the light of recent developments, it may well be that not all provinces will enter the Covenant. Tragically, that may be appropriate at this time.

The working party has explained their guiding principles as "minimal revision" but with some "clearer definition" and "change of tone in language." I believe they have achieved their aim admirably.

Four key questions are now answered:

Can dioceses commit themselves to the Covenant? The Covenant is designed primarily for "Provinces of the Anglican Communion" — these are the "Churches of the Anglican Communion" referred to in the text. However, dioceses are included in the phrase "any ecclesial body" and some dioceses, for instance Communion Partner dioceses in the Episcopal Church, which may wish to commit themselves to the Covenant if their provinces do not, will be allowed to do so. The working party quote again the principles of "The Lambeth Commentary" (September 2008):

If, however, the canons and constitutions of a Province permit, there is no reason why a diocesan synod should not commit itself to the covenant, thus strengthening its commitment to the interdependent life of the Communion.

Can Churches which are not yet current members of the Anglican Consultative Council affirm the Covenant (e.g. the Anglican Church in North America)?

Yes, but this does not make them members of the ACC and future membership will follow due process (section 4.1.5).

What of Churches which choose not to enter into the Covenant? The text deliberately does not deal with this matter, but the working party states that the Instruments of Communion should determine an appropriate response. This may appear weak, but it seems to me to be appropriate: not being invited to conferences and commissions may be in mind.

Which group will be monitoring the implementation of the Covenant? In this final text, it is the "Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion," which recently evolved from the Joint Standing Committee of the Primates' Meeting and the ACC (Ridley Draft).

So, after a long period of gestation the Covenant is born. Let us be encouraged and continue our support in prayer.

The Rt. Rev. Graham Kings is Bishop of Sherborne in the Church of England.

The working party has explained their guiding principles as "minimal revision."

Clear Consequences

By Josiah Idowu-Fearon

The final text of the Covenant is the result of hard work by the various carefully selected sisters and brothers from several parts of our Communion. We appreciate and thank them for all the sacrifices made during the course of their assignments.

In the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Covenant "is not going to solve all our problems, it's not going to be a constitution, and it's certainly not a penal code for punishing people who don't comply."

Members of this Communion need to be reminded that the 1998 Lambeth Conference took a position on the question of human sexuality which was revisited at the 2008 conference and reaffirmed. That position has therefore not changed. For individual dioceses that have gone against this agreed parameter we drew for ourselves, sections

(Continued on next page)

The Covenant gives non-Anglicans an idea of who we are and how we agree to resolve our differences.

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4.2.5 and 4.2.8 of this final text of the Covenant are very clear on the likely consequences of their decision.

What section 4.2.8 recommends is already operational, in an analogous way, in some parts of our Communion. In the Church of Nigeria, for example, polygamists and the divorced are not officially accepted as leaders at any level and not even allowed Holy Communion. In addition, all women who are not willing to accept the discipline of this Church in holy matrimony cannot be members of the Mothers' Union. To give them a sense of belonging, they are provided with an alternative: the Women's Guild.

The proposed role of the Standing Committee in the Covenant (section 4.2) is an improvement on the liaison officers suggested in the Windsor Report (article 25). I hope the Standing Committee will be given all the necessary freedom and assistance to function effectively.

The Covenant gives non-Anglicans an idea of who we are and how we agree to resolve our differences as a family. I hope that bishops in every province will encourage robust debates and discussions of this final text of the Covenant. As the Archbishop of Canterbury has said, "We hope to see people agreeing to these ways of resolving our conflicts."

The Most Rev. Josiah Idowu-Fearon is Archbishop of the Province of Kaduna, Nigeria.

Living Interdependently

By Tony Clavier

It seems to me that the draft Covenant calls us all to a more robust biblical doctrine of the Church. If indeed it puts provincial autonomy in its right place . . . so much the better.

In that the onus is placed on the provinces to live into interdependence, it is both biblical and Anglican. The Covenant acknowledges that there will be differences, points to Christian means of resolving conflict and realistically acknowledges that individual provinces may be so sure of

a unique revelation from God that they feel called to walk apart from the fellowship by their own volition.

I am also delighted that approving the Covenant is a right open not only to the provinces but to all who see in it something akin, in fleshed out terms, to that which was offered to Christendom in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral. I see the text as a formidable gift to ecumenism and hope that it will be read and considered in that wider context.

Some opposed to the Covenant, obsessed with their own narrow vision, seem threatened that the Covenant is being offered to Christendom. A reactive Covenant narrowly focused on contemporary Communion discord would have been unworthy. The text now before us, I believe, is a wonderful example of something entirely virtuous emerging from something temporarily necessary.

The Rev. Tony Clavier is the rector of St. Paul's Church, LaPorte, Ind.

Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence

By Richard Kew

The Anglican Communion Covenant seems to be a modest revision of the text that was developed here at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, in April. The provisions in Section 4 that have been under dispute make a lot of sense, but it hardly surprises me that those who cannot buy into the Covenant's substance are making noises that sound distinctly like "walking apart." Many of them have been on this pathway for some time now. The Covenant text is a very fair document and eminently reflective of the root and branches of historic Anglicanism.

The statement in 4.2.1 is key: "the Covenant operates to express the common commitments and mutual accountability which hold each Church in the relationship of communion with one another. Recognition of, and fidelity to, this Covenant, enable

mutual recognition and communion.”

These words and those that follow strongly echo the whole case for mutual responsibility and interdependence (MRI) that came out of the Toronto Anglican Congress of 1963, and which was being discussed by parishes, dioceses, and provinces in the following couple of years, during which time I was responding to God's call to the priesthood. That was my first encounter with the Anglican Communion, and as a result of the discussion of those principles I came to realize just how significant these are to faithful communion with one another.

Those in the Episcopal Church who assert independence for provinces ignore the overriding responsibility to be mutually responsible and interdependent. Those Anglicans of the historic faith who have chosen to stand outside the mainstream of Communion for the moment would do well to take seriously the MRI principles, because they do mean being together with those with whom they disagree, while those considering “walking apart” should assess what they lose if they choose independence over interdependence.

Independence sounds much like the personal autonomy that is demanded by post-modern people. It is so uncomfortable with absolutes that the doctrinal and ecclesiological principles of Anglicanism can only be negated by demands for independence. Living in the community of communion requires Catholic faithfulness, but also flexibility and the ability to live with differences. Those claiming independence for their province are, in effect, putting themselves before the whole community.

The Covenant is an exercise in attempting to live with diversity within the context of being a truthful community. If a province cannot live with the theological and behavioral clarity that exemplifies historic Anglicanism rooted within the wider Catholic faith, then it would do better to step back from the table, while not hindering those in their midst for whom being part of the larger whole is important. However, I suspect this is asking too much in the way of toleration of diversity.

The Rev. Richard Kew is development director at Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

Independence sounds much like the personal autonomy that is demanded by postmodern people.

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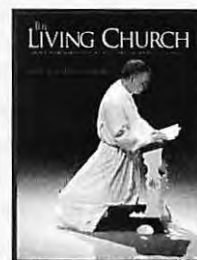
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Baptism and the Power of the Spirit

“And the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form, as a dove” (Luke 3:22).

BCP: Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 89:1-29 or 89:20-29; Acts 10:34-38; Luke 3:15-16,21-22

RCL: Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

The descending dove hovers over St. Luke's account of Jesus' baptism. The baptism story is told similarly in the first three gospels, but only Luke makes it clear that the dove was a spectacle seen by all, a clear sign of the anointing of the Spirit poured out by God the Father on his beloved Son.

The Old Testament abounds with other stories of leaders anointed by the Spirit. Judges, kings and prophets were all touched by the Spirit and received power to do God's work. In that tradition, Isaiah describes the coming Messiah: “I have put my Spirit on him, he will bring forth justice to the nations.” The anointing of the Spirit marked the Messiah as specially chosen by God, and brought the wisdom and strength to do his will. “He will

not fail or be discouraged,” Isaiah writes, “until he has established justice on the earth.”

The epistle lesson highlights this aspect of Jesus' ministry. Jesus' power to heal and to cast out demons is a sign of the Spirit's presence in him. From his baptism by John in the Jordan to the cross, Jesus was at work to “establish justice,” reconciling the world to fellowship with his Father.

John describes Jesus as the one who would “baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” Jesus would pass on his Spirit to his disciples, prospering their work for him with the same power that he had received from the Spirit. Every baptism is a Pentecost in miniature. The candidate is “reborn by the Holy Spirit,” receiving God's power to “con-

fess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share in his eternal priesthood.” We are not left to our own devices, but rely on the strength supplied by the Holy Spirit.

This Sunday will be widely observed as Anglican Communion Sunday. On a day so marked by the miracle of the Spirit's work and when our Church so greatly needs God's healing power, Archbishop Williams' 2008 Pentecost remarks are well worth remembering: “Only God the Holy Spirit can bind us together in lasting and Christ-centered way, and only God the Holy Spirit can give us the words we need to make Christ truly known in our world. So we must go on praying hard with our people that the Spirit will bring these possibilities to fruition as only he can.”

Look It Up

How is Christian baptism like the miracle described in Numbers 11:25-26?

Think About It

Where in your life do you need the power that the Spirit supplies?

Next Sunday The Second Sunday After The Epiphany (Year C), January 17, 2010

BCP: Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 96 or 96:1-10; 1 Cor. 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

RCL: Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10; 1 Cor. 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

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news

(REVISIONS, from page 7)

autonomy of governance in the Churches of the Anglican Communion, then a necessary corollary of this is that the autonomy of a Church's relationships of Communion also cannot be constrained. What the covenant seeks to do is to find an ecclesial framework by which a common response to tensions can be discerned and articulated. This contrasts with the present situation where no agreed mechanisms for action exist, and this lack has seriously threatened the integrity of the Communion. What the relational consequences might be were explored by the Covenant Design Group in their meeting in Singapore in September 2008, and were set out in the Lambeth Commentary at page 25. There they were deliberately listed in a range from the lightest "no action," to the most serious "breaking of

ecclesial communion and walking apart."

The Covenant Working Group notes that since Anglican Churches value autonomy over a central jurisdiction, the Communion can only ever guide — it must be left to the Churches to decide (cf. Ridley Cambridge Commentary, note on Section 3, page 3). However, in the face of certain fears being expressed by some Provinces that chaos could result as each Church decides to act in a different way, Churches are now invited to accept or reject specific recommendations from the Standing Committee.

The Covenant Working Group accepts the argument that it is only appropriate for the representatives of Churches which are participating in the life of the Covenant to determine questions relating to the maintenance of the Covenant (April text, 4.2.7; November text, 4.2.8).

people & places

Deaths

The Rev. **John H. Elledge, Jr.**, who served as rector of parishes in six states, died Dec. 13 in Havre de Grace, MD. He was 70.

Born in Hattiesburg, MS, he was a graduate of Ohio State University and earned his M.Div. from the University of the South. He was a retired colonel in the U.S. Air Force and served in Vietnam and in Operation Desert Storm. After ordination as priest and deacon in 1977, Fr. Elledge served as rector of St. Mary's, Jasper, AL, 1977-81; St. John's, Cuyahoga Falls, OH, 1981-83; St. Luke's, Phillipsburg, NJ, 1984-89; St. John's, North Haven, CT, 1989-96; St. Ambrose, Boulder, CO; and St. John's, Havre de Grace, from 2000 until his recent retirement. He contributed a number of articles to *THE LIVING CHURCH* and served on the commission on ministry for the Diocese of Maryland, the Havre de Grace Ministerium, and on the boards of Grace Place and St. John's Towers. He is survived by his wife of 25 years, Mindy; a son, John III; daughters Jennifer

Elledge Dillon, Heather Gallagher, and Kimberley Semco; seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

The Rev. **Frank A. Smith**, 78, a priest in the Diocese of Southeast Florida for two decades, died Sept. 20 in Chapin, S.C., of cancer.

Born in Flint, Mich., he was a graduate of Bob Jones University and Berkeley Baptist Theological Seminary. He later attended Church Divinity School of the Pacific and was ordained to the priesthood in 1961. He served as a curate at St. Luke's, San Francisco, 1961-62, then as rector at St. Peter's, Red Bluff, Calif., 1962-66; St. Peter's, Amarillo, TX, 1966-71; Holy Family, Miami, Fla., 1971-78; and St. Mary Magdalene, Coral Springs, Fla., 1978-91, when he retired. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Dale; two daughters and a son.

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