



Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil

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Statement from the Bishop's House on the Anglican Covenant, St. Andrews Draft

Life in Communion and the Communion of Life

At our meeting of the House of Bishops , we, the bishops of the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil, , wish to say that we are following with great interest the work of the Commission, which is proposing to the Anglican Communion a Covenant whose objective would be to help overcome the current tensions within the church.

We appreciate the effort and sincere concern of this group and we recognize how their work has brought about important reflections on our nature as communion.

However, although acknowledging that commendable effort, we believe that our Communion does not need new instruments of consensus beyond those that historically have been our benchmarks in terms of identity.

We have diligently studied the second draft of the Covenant, known as the St Andrew's Draft, and despite some new insights shown from the first reactions to the proposal coming from various parts of the Communion, according to our view, the proposition is still problematic.

Sections 05 and 06 in the new proposal focus on elements that we believe are unnecessary and inapplicable to our Communion. In the manner in which they are presented, they constitute a serious setback in the understanding of what is Communion, prioritising the juridical dimension more and less so the ecclesiological and affective dimensions that have been the historical mark of our mutual interdependence.

The Covenant continues to be a mistaken proposal for the resolution of conflicts through the creation of curial instances absolutely alien to our ethos.

We are fully convinced that the time in which we live is marked by symptoms that value highly the building up of networks and other manifestations of communion in a spontaneous way in the various aspects of human life. Insisting on a formal and juridical Covenant, with the logic of discipline and exercise of power, means to move in the opposite direction, thus returning to the days of Modernity, with its Confessions, Covenants, Diets and other rational instruments of theological consensus.

The nature of the Anglican Communion already has sufficient elements that both characterize and nurture it. This is the richness of our cultural and hermeneutical diversity that always creates the challenge of positive tension for us, which experienced in the exercise of dispersed and

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shared authority. We can not, however, allow it to be replaced by a legal, circumstantial instrument of political control.

Communion is never created and developed by the letter. The true communion is nurtured by the Spirit. The true communion is life. The paschal mystery that we live in this liturgical season is an unmistakable demonstration of what we need to re-affirm. Faith in the Risen Christ does not presuppose text, but rather an open heart and a humble faith. It was the event of the Resurrection and the affective perception of it that generated a Community, a Communion.

Thus, inspired by this liturgical season and aware of the richness of our Communion, we manifest the conviction that the Covenant is not an essential element to maintain or strengthen our Communion; on the contrary, it risks defacing it. Our history and the instruments we have are already sufficient to build unity from the richness of our diversity, in a continuous process of listening and mutual respect.

Curitiba, 04 April 2008.

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