

**The Report of the Joint Standing Committee
to the Archbishop of Canterbury
on the Response of The Episcopal Church to the Questions of the Primates
articulated at their meeting in Dar es Salaam
and related Pastoral Concerns**

Introduction

The Joint Standing Committee met in formal session on Monday 24 September in order to reflect on the conversation in which we had participated with Your Grace at the meeting of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church, held in New Orleans between Wednesday 19 September and Tuesday 25 September. We are grateful to the House of Bishops for their consideration in ensuring that their schedule was changed to seek to create as much space as possible to consider their response on the Monday, although sadly the House of Bishops were not able to complete the process of developing their response before our meeting concluded.

The Joint Standing Committee were however briefed by Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori and other bishops on the Monday evening, and had the opportunity to agree together the main outlines of how they might wish to respond in the light of the various options facing the House of Bishops. All members of the Joint Standing Committee present in New Orleans¹ have been consulted electronically in the preparation of this report once the actual text of the statement of the House of Bishops was available.

It has to be acknowledged that the House has laboured long and strenuously to come to a conclusion, and to offer its response to the requests of the Windsor Report, as reiterated in the Communiqué of the Primates meeting in Dar es Salaam in February of this year. This reflects the fact that the House of Bishops were themselves of differing perspectives on the questions before them; it also reflects their readiness to respond to the concerns raised by the Communion by coming to conclusions which command a wide consensus across the members of the House. The effort expended in reaching these conclusions should be acknowledged.

In addition to addressing the specific questions of the Windsor Report, the Episcopal House of Bishops also addressed other matters of related concern raised in the Communiqué of the Primates from their meeting at Dar es Salaam which will be addressed separately.

In preparing this report, we have been careful to distinguish between the response to the two questions concerning the Windsor Report which the Primates addressed to the Episcopal Church and on which they requested an answer by 30th September 2007, and other urgent but distinct matters raised in that Communiqué, for the resolution of which no specific date was set.

Although the tensions within the Anglican Communion will not be resolved until all these matters are addressed, the wider questions, which concern the polity of The Episcopal Church

¹ The Joint Standing Committee present in New Orleans were: The Archbishop of Canterbury (on the Thursday and Friday) President Bishop Mouneer Anis, Archbishop Phillip Aspinall, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, Archbishop Barry Morgan (Primates' Standing Committee); Bishop John Paterson (Chair, ACC), George Koshy (Vice-Chair), Philippa Amable, Jolly Babirukamu, Robert Fordham, Bishop Kumara Illangasinghe, Elizabeth Paver, Bishop James Tengatenga, and Nomfundo Walaza (ACC Standing Committee).

and the provision of pastoral care for those who are alienated by certain recent developments in its life, do not form part of the issues which were requested to be addressed by the date set in the schedule of the Primates' Communiqué for specific answers on the questions set out below. Those wider matters of pastoral concern remain urgent, and are addressed in the second part of our report.

Part One

The Response of The Episcopal Church to the Windsor Report

The Lambeth Commission on Communion was commissioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury in October 2003 at the request of the Primates:

1. To examine and report to him by 30th September 2004, in preparation for the ensuing meetings of the Primates and the Anglican Consultative Council, on the legal and theological implications flowing from the decisions of the Episcopal Church (USA) to appoint a priest in a committed same sex relationship as one of its bishops, ... and the ways in which provinces of the Anglican Communion may relate to one another in situations where the ecclesiastical authorities of one province feel unable to maintain the fullness of communion with another part of the Anglican Communion².

The Windsor Report was published in October 2004, and contained specific questions addressed to The Episcopal Church in respect of the matter of the election of bishops and the authorisation of Rites of Blessing for same-sex unions. These requests are set out in the relevant sections below.

At their meeting in Dromantine in February 2005, the Primates asked:

“During [the period leading up to the next Lambeth Conference] we request that [the Episcopal Church] respond through [its] relevant constitutional bodies to the questions specifically addressed to them in the Windsor Report as they consider their place within the Anglican Communion.”³

These questions were addressed by The Episcopal Church at the 75th General Convention held in June 2006. The responses given there were assessed in detail in the Report of a Sub-Group established by the Joint Standing Committee and presented to the Primates at their meeting in Dar es Salaam in February 2007. On reviewing that report, the primates concluded:

On Clarifying the Response to Windsor

The Primates recognise the seriousness with which The Episcopal Church addressed the requests of the Windsor Report put to it by the Primates at their Dromantine Meeting. They value and accept the apology and the request for forgiveness made⁴.

² The Mandate of the Lambeth Commission on Communion, contained in the Windsor Report, p.13

³ Dromantine Communiqué, §14

⁴ *Resolved*, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, mindful of “the repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation enjoined on us by Christ” (Windsor Report, paragraph 134), express its regret for straining

While they appreciate the actions of the 75th General Convention which offer some affirmation of the Windsor Report and its recommendations, they deeply regret a lack of clarity about certain of those responses.

In particular, the Primates request, through the Presiding Bishop, that the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church

1. make an unequivocal common covenant that the bishops will not authorise any Rite of Blessing for same-sex unions in their dioceses or through General Convention (cf TWR, §143, 144); and
2. confirm that the passing of Resolution B033 of the 75th General Convention means that a candidate for episcopal orders living in a same-sex union shall not receive the necessary consent (cf TWR, §134);

unless some new consensus on these matters emerges across the Communion (cf TWR, §134).

The Primates request that the answer of the House of Bishops is conveyed to the Primates by the Presiding Bishop by 30th September 2007.

If the reassurances requested of the House of Bishops cannot in good conscience be given, the relationship of The Episcopal Church remains damaged at best, and this has consequences for the full participation of the Church in the life of the Communion.

At their meeting in New Orleans, the bishops of The Episcopal Church have had the opportunity to reflect on these two questions, and to offer their response.

*On public Rites of Blessing for same-sex unions*⁵

In May 2003, the Primates had expressed their own understanding of the position in the Communion with regard to the authorisation of public Rites of Blessing for same-sex unions:

“The question of public rites for the blessing of same sex unions is still a cause of potentially divisive controversy. The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke for us all when he said that it is through liturgy that we express what we believe, and that there is no theological consensus about same sex unions. Therefore, we as a body cannot support the authorisation of such rites.

This is distinct from the duty of pastoral care that is laid upon all Christians to respond with love and understanding to people of all sexual orientations. As recognised in the booklet “True Union”, it is necessary to maintain a breadth of private response to situations of individual pastoral care.”⁶

the bonds of affection in the events surrounding the General Convention of 2003 and the consequences which followed; offer its sincerest apology to those within our Anglican Communion who are offended by our failure to accord sufficient importance to the impact of our actions on our church and other parts of the Communion; and ask forgiveness as we seek to live into deeper levels of communion one with another. The Communion Sub-Group added the comment: “These words were not lightly offered, and should not be lightly received.”

⁵ Cf The Windsor Report, §136-146

⁶ *The Primates’ Pastoral Letter, Gramado, May 2003*

The Windsor Report concluded that:

“... at present it would be true to say that very many people within the Communion fail to see how the authorisation of such a rite is compatible with the teaching of scripture, tradition and reason. In such circumstances, it should not be surprising that such developments are seen by some as surrendering to the spirit of the age rather than an authentic development of the gospel.

We believe that to proceed unilaterally with the authorisation of public Rites of Blessing for same sex unions at this time goes against the formally expressed opinions of the Instruments of Unity and therefore constitutes action in breach of the legitimate application of the Christian faith as the churches of the Anglican Communion have received it, and of bonds of affection in the life of the Communion, especially the principle of interdependence. For the sake of our common life, we call upon all bishops of the Anglican Communion to honour the Primates’ Pastoral Letter of May 2003, by not proceeding to authorise public Rites of Blessing for same sex unions.

... we call for a moratorium on all such public Rites.”⁷

The Communion Sub-Group of the Joint Standing Committee, in their Report, noted that a wide variety of practice currently appertained across the Episcopal Church⁸, and concluded that:

“It is therefore not at all clear whether, in fact, the Episcopal Church is living with the recommendations of the Windsor Report on this matter. The Primates in their statement of March 2003 did admit that there could be “a breadth of private response to individual pastoral care”, but it is clear that the authorisation by any one bishop, diocese or Province, of any public Rite of Blessing, or permission to develop or use such a rite, would go against the standard of teaching to which the Communion as a whole has indicated that it is bound. We do not see how bishops who continue to act in a way which diverges from the common life of the Communion can be fully incorporated into its ongoing life. This is therefore a question which needs to be addressed urgently by the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church.”⁹

At their meeting in Dar es Salaam, the Primates, quoting the statement in the Primates’ Pastoral Letter of May 2003, said,

“we believe that there remains a lack of clarity about the stance of The Episcopal Church, especially its position on the authorisation of Rites of Blessing for persons living in same-sex unions. There appears to us to be an inconsistency between the position of General Convention and local pastoral provision. We recognise that the General Convention made no explicit resolution about such Rites and in fact declined to pursue resolutions which, if passed, could have led to the development and authorisation of them. However, we understand that local pastoral provision is made in some places for such blessings. It is the ambiguous stance of The Episcopal Church which causes concern among us.

⁷ The Windsor Report, §142-144

⁸ Paragraphs 13-17.

⁹ Communion Sub-Group Report, §17

The standard of teaching stated in Resolution 1.10 of the Lambeth Conference 1998 asserted that the Conference “cannot advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions”¹⁰. (Dar es Salaam Communiqué, §21,22)

and made this further request for the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church to:

“make an unequivocal common covenant that the bishops will not authorise any Rite of Blessing for same-sex unions in their dioceses or through General Convention” (Schedule to the Dar es Salaam Communiqué, February 2007)

The House of Bishops has now said that they “pledge as a body not to authorize public rites for the blessing of same-sex unions”¹¹. In their discussion of that pledge:

Blessing of Same-Sex Unions

We, the members of the House of Bishops, pledge not to authorize for use in our dioceses any public rites of blessing of same-sex unions until a broader consensus emerges in the Communion, or until General Convention takes further action. In the near future we hope to be able to draw upon the benefits of the Communion-wide listening process. In the meantime, it is important to note that no rite of blessing for persons living in same-sex unions has been adopted or approved by our General Convention. In addition to not having authorized liturgies the majority of bishops do not make allowance for the blessing of same-sex unions. We do note that in May 2003 the Primates said we have a pastoral duty "to respond with love and understanding to people of all sexual orientations." They further stated, "...[I]t is necessary to maintain a breadth of private response to situations of individual pastoral care."

These statements (Summary and Discussion), taken together, address the request of the Primates at Dar es Salaam. The bishops have pledged themselves not to authorise public rites in their dioceses. In giving this commitment with the proviso “or until General Convention takes further action”, the House of Bishops is acknowledging that it does not have the power to bind future actions of General Convention, in the same way that most of the general synods of the Provinces of the Anglican Communion cannot be bound by any part or section of their polity.

It is to be noted that the House of Bishops states that “the majority of bishops do not make allowance for the blessing of same-sex unions” and quote the words of the primates in 2003 concerning “a breadth of private response to situations of individual pastoral care.” The principle which has historically been applied by Anglicans to common prayer is “Lex orandi, lex credendi”, that is, that our liturgy expresses what we believe. Given that there is no agreed theological framework on ministry to homosexual persons entering into committed relationships, it is currently widely understood that it would be inappropriate to develop liturgical expressions of blessing for such relationships¹². Indeed, the teaching most widely upheld across the Communion was embodied in Resolution 1.10 of the 1998 Lambeth

¹⁰ 1998 Lambeth Resolution I.10, section 5

¹¹ Summary section of the New Orleans Statement.

¹² This was precisely the argument in the Pastoral Letter of the Primates in May 2003. “The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke for us all when he said that it is through liturgy that we express what we believe, and that there is no theological consensus about same sex unions.” From the Primates’ Pastoral Letter, Gramado, May 2003.

Conference, which “rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture”¹³, concluded that the Conference “cannot advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions.”¹⁴

The Episcopal Church has acknowledged in the past, however, that “local faith communities are operating within the bounds of our common life as they explore and experience liturgies celebrating and blessing same-sex unions”¹⁵. In answer to the way in which this resolution was understood in the Windsor Report¹⁶, it has been said that this statement was to be understood descriptively of a reality current in 2003 and not as permissive, and the Special Commission on the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion prior to the 75th General Convention (2006) specifically denied that it was intended to authorise such rites¹⁷.

It needs to be made clear however that we believe that the celebration of a public liturgy which includes a blessing on a same-sex union is not within the breadth of private pastoral response envisaged by the Primates in their Pastoral Letter of 2003, and that the undertaking made by the bishops in New Orleans is understood to mean that the use of any such rites or liturgies will not in future have the bishop’s authority “until a broader consensus emerges in the Communion, or until General Convention takes further action”¹⁸, a qualification which is in line with the limits that the Constitution of The Episcopal Church places upon the bishops.

On this basis, we understand the statement of the House of Bishops in New Orleans to have met the request of the Windsor Report in that the Bishops have declared “a moratorium on all such public Rites”¹⁹, and the request of the Primates at Dar es Salaam that the bishops should “make an unequivocal common covenant that the bishops will not authorise any Rite of Blessing for same-sex unions in their dioceses” since we have their pledge explicitly in those terms.

*On elections to the episcopate*²⁰

At the epicentre of tensions in the Communion over the last five years has been the fact that the Episcopal Church elected and consecrated as a Bishop a person publicly acknowledged to be living in a committed same-sex relationship. In October 2003, the Primates stated that:

“In most of our provinces the election of Canon Gene Robinson would not have been possible since his chosen lifestyle would give rise to a canonical impediment to his consecration as a bishop. If his consecration proceeds, we recognise that we have reached a crucial and critical point in the life of the Anglican Communion and we have had to conclude that the future of the Communion itself will be put in jeopardy. In this case, the ministry of this one bishop will not be recognised by most of the Anglican world, and many provinces are likely to consider themselves to be out of Communion with the Episcopal Church (USA). This will tear the fabric of our Communion at its deepest level, ...”

¹³ Lambeth 1998, Resolution I.10, section 4a

¹⁴ Lambeth 1998, Resolution I.10, section 5

¹⁵ Resolution C051 of the 74th General Convention 2003.

¹⁶ Cf. The Windsor Report, §144, where it was understood as giving permission for the development of such rites.

¹⁷ The Report of the Special Commission on The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion, §53

¹⁸ Statement of the House of Bishops at New Orleans, September 2007

¹⁹ Cf. The Windsor Report, §144, quoted above.

²⁰ Cf The Windsor Report, §124-135

and requested the formation of the Lambeth Commission which produced the Windsor Report in October 2004. The Windsor Report stated:

“In our view, all those involved in the processes of episcopal appointment, at whichever level, should in future in the light of all that has happened pay proper regard to the acceptability of the candidate to other provinces in our Communion; the issue should be addressed by those locally concerned at the earliest stages, by those provincially involved in the confirmation of any election, and not least by those who, acting on those decisions, consecrate the individual into the order of bishop.” (The Windsor Report, §131)

and requested that:

“the Episcopal Church (USA) be invited to effect a moratorium on the election and consent to the consecration of any candidate to the episcopate who is living in a same gender union until some new consensus in the Anglican Communion emerges.” (The Windsor Report, §134)

At General Convention in June 2006, General Convention passed Resolution B033, which stated:

“Resolved, That the 75th General Convention receive and embrace The Windsor Report’s invitation to engage in a process of healing and reconciliation; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention therefore call upon Standing Committees and bishops with jurisdiction to exercise restraint by not consenting to the consecration of any candidate to the episcopate whose manner of life presents a challenge to the wider church and will lead to further strains on communion.”

The Communion Sub-Group established by the Joint Standing Committee concluded:

8. The group noted that, in this resolution, the language of moratorium from the Windsor Report had not been used. It understood that legal counsel to the Convention advised that the language of a moratorium was difficult to embody in legislation under the provisions of the Episcopal Church’s constitution.
9. Instead the resolution uses the language of “restraint”, and the group noted that there has been considerable discussion since General Convention about the exact force of that word. By requiring that the restraint must be expressed in a particular way - “by not consenting ...”, however, the resolution is calling for a precise response, which complies with the force of the recommendation of the Windsor Report. The resolution, which was passed by large majorities in both houses, therefore calls upon those charged with the giving of consent to the result of any election to the episcopate to refuse consent to candidates whose “manner of life presents a challenge to the wider church and will lead to further strains on communion”.
10. In voting for this resolution, the majority of bishops with jurisdiction have indicated that they will refuse consent in future to the consecration of a bishop whose manner of life challenges the wider church and leads to further strains on Communion. This

represents a significant shift from the position which applied in 2003. It was noted that a small number of bishops indicated that they would not abide by the resolution of General Convention, but in supporting the resolution the majority of bishops have committed themselves to the recommendations of the Windsor Report.

11. The group noted that while the Windsor Report restricted its recommendation to candidates for the episcopate who were living in a same gender union, the resolution at General Convention widened this stricture to apply to a range of lifestyles which present a wider challenge. The group welcomed this widening of the principle, which was also recommended by the Windsor Report²¹, and commend it to the Communion.
12. The group believes therefore that General Convention has complied in this resolution with the request of the Primates.²²

At their meeting in Dar es Salaam in February 2007, however, not all of the primates were fully convinced of this interpretation,

“... some of us believe that Resolution B033 of the 75th General Convention²³ does not in fact give the assurances requested in the Windsor Report.”²⁴

and in their Communiqué the Primates therefore asked the Episcopal House of Bishops to:

“... confirm that the passing of Resolution B033 of the 75th General Convention means that a candidate for episcopal orders living in a same-sex union shall not receive the necessary consent ... unless some new consensus on these matters emerges across the Communion.”²⁵

We now have the following response of the House of Bishops:

Resolution B033 of the 2006 General Convention

The House of Bishops concurs with Resolution EC011 of the Executive Council. This Resolution commends the Report of the Communion Sub-Group of the Joint Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates of the Anglican Communion as an accurate evaluation of Resolution B033 of the 2006 General Convention, calling upon bishops with jurisdiction and Standing Committees "to exercise restraint by not consenting to the consecration of any candidate to the episcopate whose manner of life presents a challenge to the wider church and will lead to further strains on communion." The House acknowledges that non-celibate gay and lesbian persons are included among those to whom B033 pertains.

By confirming the interpretation of the Communion Sub-Group and quoting it explicitly, as well as making the explicit acknowledgement in the last sentence of their text that Resolution B033 does refer to “non-celibate gay and lesbian persons”, the Episcopal House of Bishops is answering the question of the Primates positively. They confirm the understanding of the

²¹ The Windsor Report, paragraph 131.

²² Report of the Communion Sub-Group of the JSC, paragraphs 8-12

²³ as set out and discussed in the Report of the Communion Sub-Group presented at the Primates' Meeting at dDar es Salaam.

²⁴ Dar es Salaam Communiqué, §23

²⁵ Schedule to the Dar es Salaam Communiqué

sub-group that restraint is exercised in a precise way “by not consenting”, and that this specifically includes “non-celibate gay and lesbian persons”. They have therefore clearly affirmed that the Communion Sub-Group were correct in interpreting Resolution B033 as meeting the request of the Windsor Report.

Conclusion

By their answers to these two questions, we believe that the Episcopal Church has clarified all outstanding questions relating to their response to the questions directed explicitly to them in the Windsor Report, and on which clarifications were sought by 30th September 2007, and given the necessary assurances sought of them.

Part Two Pastoral Issues

*On care of dissenting groups*²⁶

Since the theological and ecclesiological tensions have developed over the election of a bishop living in a same-sex relationship and the authorisation in parts of the Communion of a public Rite of Blessing of same-sex unions, enormous strains have also arisen in the Communion regarding the pastoral care of those parishes and dioceses within the Episcopal Church that have been alienated from the life and structures of the Episcopal Church because of those developments. This was recognised by the Primates in their meeting in October 2003, called after consent had been given to the candidate elected to the See of New Hampshire but before his consecration. The Primates wrote then:

“We have a particular concern for those who in all conscience feel bound to dissent from the teaching and practice of their province in such matters. Whilst we reaffirm the teaching of successive Lambeth Conferences that bishops must respect the autonomy and territorial integrity of dioceses and provinces other than their own, we call on the provinces concerned to make adequate provision for episcopal oversight of dissenting minorities within their own area of pastoral care in consultation with the Archbishop of Canterbury on behalf of the Primates.” (Primates’ Communiqué, Lambeth, October 2003)

In March 2004, the Bishops of The Episcopal Church adopted a plan for such congregations in the Statement, *Caring for All the Churches*. The plan was designated “Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight”. In addressing these matters in Section D (Paragraphs 147 – 155), the Windsor Report supported the arrangements offered in that scheme.

Since then, however, further parishes have sought pastoral oversight outside the normal structures of jurisdiction, as have some dioceses, whose Standing Committees, feeling unable to accept the primatial ministry of Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, have appealed to the Archbishop of Canterbury for a form of “alternative primatial oversight”.

In response to these developments, some primates and bishops of other Provinces have been drawn into *ad hoc* arrangements assuming or claiming differing levels of pastoral and

²⁶ Cf The Windsor Report, §147-155

episcopal authority for such a ministry. This has created a complex pattern of parishes which are opting out of the life and structure of The Episcopal Church and of interventions by other Anglican jurisdictions. Even so, the numbers appear to remain relatively small. Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori reports that there are perhaps 45 parishes of the overall total of 7600 parishes in The Episcopal Church, in which majorities have voted to depart from The Episcopal Church, often leaving behind members who form the core of a continuing Episcopal congregation. It has to be acknowledged, however, that some of those parishes seeking alternative arrangements are amongst the larger congregations within The Episcopal Church.

In addition, it is becoming clear that around half a dozen dioceses are likely to look to withdraw from The Episcopal Church if their leadership continues in their conviction that The Episcopal Church has departed from a proper understanding of the Christian faith as received by Anglicans.

At the heart of the growing pattern of alienation and competing jurisdictions are pastoral concerns. How can provision be made for the pastoral care of parishes and dioceses that feel that those charged within The Episcopal Church with their episcopal or primatial oversight (that is, the existing diocesan bishop or the Presiding Bishop) are not able to exercise that charge effectively because of theological differences? How can their legitimate theological perspectives be safeguarded, and the aspirations of those called to ministry from those theological perspectives be nourished? The leadership of the Episcopal Church is content that sufficient provision and protection can be provided within the DEPO scheme, while the congregations that have sought alternatives, have, by that very action, indicated that they believe such provision is insufficient.

At Dar es Salaam, the Primates offered this articulation of the situation:

31. Three urgent needs exist. First, those of us who have lost trust in The Episcopal Church need to be re-assured that there is a genuine readiness in The Episcopal Church to embrace fully the recommendations of the Windsor Report.
32. Second, those of us who have intervened in other jurisdictions believe that we cannot abandon those who have appealed to us for pastoral care in situations in which they find themselves at odds with the normal jurisdiction. For interventions to cease, what is required is a robust scheme of pastoral oversight to provide individuals and congregations alienated from The Episcopal Church with adequate space to flourish within the life of that church in the period leading up to the conclusion of the Covenant Process.
33. Third, the Presiding Bishop has reminded us that in The Episcopal Church there are those who have lost trust in the Primates and bishops of certain of our Provinces because they fear that they are all too ready to undermine or subvert the polity of The Episcopal Church. There is an urgent need to embrace the recommendations of the Windsor Report and to bring an end to all interventions. (Communiqué, Dar es Salaam, February 2007)

In the first part of this report, we have indicated that the further clarifications offered by the House of Bishops at New Orleans do address the first of these points. For there to be healing in the Communion, the remaining points now need to be addressed.

At Dar es Salaam, the primates sought to address these matters by proposing that The Episcopal Church turn to a particular group of bishops living and ministering within its life, who had publicly declared that they accepted both the standard of teaching expressed in the 1998 Lambeth Resolution 1.10 and were unreservedly committed to the recommendations of the Windsor Report²⁷. In other words, the primates were indicating to those who felt alienated from the leadership of The Episcopal Church that there were identifiable bishops within The Episcopal Church able to meet the needs identified by the groups seeking alternative pastoral provision without the need for “foreign intervention”.

Unfortunately, there were aspects of the recommendations of the Primates at Dar es Salaam that The Episcopal Church felt bound to reject because they were perceived as inappropriate interventions into the polity of The Episcopal Church and contrary to its Canons and Constitution.

As a Joint Standing Committee, we recommend that the Archbishop of Canterbury encourage the duly constituted authorities of The Episcopal Church, as a matter of urgency, to consult further on the issue of the provision of pastoral care and oversight for dissenting congregations and parishes in consultation with those who are requesting it and those bishops of The Episcopal Church who by their theological stance should be able to command the respect of dissenting congregations.

In particular, such consultation could be taken in conjunction with the scheme for “Episcopal Visitors” announced by the Presiding bishop at the House of Bishops Meeting in New Orleans, and supported by the House of Bishops in its Statement²⁸. It is to be noted that the Presiding Bishop has commended the work by those bishops of The Episcopal Church who have initiated partnerships to address questions of extended episcopal oversight.

In her opening remarks to the House of Bishops, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori indicated to the assembled bishops that she had appointed eight Episcopal Visitors. These visitors will represent the Presiding Bishop in the exercise of her functions of visitation, and to undertake Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight of congregations or parishes seeking such ministry. The Presiding Bishop also indicated that she was willing to add further names to the list of those appointed to act in this way, and since the New Orleans Meeting four others have been named.

We believe that these initiatives offer a viable basis on which to proceed. Bishop Jefferts Schori indicated that she deliberately left open and flexible the operation of the ministry of the Episcopal Visitors, believing that it was best for the visitor and the diocesan bishop concerned to work out an acceptable scheme. The Presiding Bishop laid down only two conditions: first, that such Episcopal visitors did not encourage dioceses or parishes to leave

²⁷ “We have received representations from a number of bishops of The Episcopal Church who have expressed a commitment to a number of principles set out in two recent letters. We recognise that these bishops are taking those actions which they believe necessary to sustain full communion with the Anglican Communion.” (Schedule to the Dar es Salaam Communiqué)

²⁸ Episcopal Visitors: We affirm the Presiding Bishop’s plan to appoint episcopal visitors for dioceses that request alternative oversight. Such oversight would be provided by bishops who are a part of and subject to the communal life of this province. We believe this plan is consistent with and analogous to Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight (DEPO) as affirmed by the Windsor Report (paragraph 152). We thank those bishops who have generously offered themselves for this ministry. We hope that dioceses will make use of this plan and that the Presiding Bishop will continue conversation with those dioceses that may feel the need for such ministries. We appreciate and need to hear all voices in The Episcopal Church. (House of Bishops Statement, New Orleans, September 2007)

the Episcopal Church, and second, that the Episcopal Visitors would report occasionally to the Presiding Bishop. By leaving this ministry flexible for negotiation and development, we believe that the Presiding Bishop has opened a way forward. There is within this proposal the potential for the development of a scheme which, with good will on the part of all parties, could meet their needs.

We recommend that the Archbishop of Canterbury find ways to encourage The leadership of The Episcopal Church to draw those who are seeking alternative patterns of oversight into conversation with those who are charged with their oversight under current structures about the way ahead. These conversations could include those bishops within The Episcopal Church whose positions should command the confidence of dissenting groups as well as the leadership of those dioceses who are seeking “alternative primatial oversight”. There is an urgent need to facilitate discussion on how a scheme might be operated and put in place within the structures of The Episcopal Church which adequately meets the concerns expressed.

Unless some measure of reassurance and security is given to those congregations, parishes, bishops and dioceses who are feeling an increasing sense of alienation from The Episcopal Church, there will be no reconciliation either within The Episcopal Church or within the wider Anglican Communion. We are also mindful of the increasing levels of litigation within The Episcopal Church and of the call of the primates at Dar es Salaam to bring an end to such litigation:

“The Primates urge the representatives of The Episcopal Church and of those congregations in property disputes with it to suspend all actions in law arising in this situation. We also urge both parties to give assurances that no steps will be taken to alienate property from The Episcopal Church without its consent or to deny the use of that property to those congregations.” (Schedule to the Dar es Salaam Communiqué)

We are dismayed as a Joint Standing Committee by the continuing use of the law courts in this situation, and request that the Archbishop of Canterbury use his influence to persuade parties to discontinue actions in law on the basis set out in the primates’ Communiqué.

On Consultation with the wider Communion

The Schedule to the Dar es Salaam Communiqué also recommended the establishment of a Pastoral Council “to act on behalf of the Primates in consultation with The Episcopal Church”²⁹. In assessing this proposal, the House of Bishops has summarised the responses from various bodies within The Episcopal Church.

“Communion-wide Consultation

In their communiqué of February 2007, the Primates proposed a "pastoral scheme." At our meeting in March 2007, we expressed our deep concern that this scheme would compromise the authority of our own primate and place the autonomy of The Episcopal Church at risk. The Executive Council reiterated our concerns and declined to participate. Nevertheless, we recognize a useful role for communion-wide consultation with respect to the pastoral needs of those seeking alternative oversight, as well as the pastoral needs of gay and lesbian persons in this and other provinces.

²⁹ Schedule to the Dar es Salaam Communiqué, February 2007.

We encourage our Presiding Bishop to continue to explore such consultation in a manner that is in accord with our Constitution and Canons.” (New Orleans Statement, September 2007)

We believe that the House of Bishops is correct in identifying that the co-operation and participation of the wider Communion, in a way which respects the integrity of the American Province, is an important element in addressing questions of pastoral oversight for those seeking alternative provision. We also believe that a body which could facilitate such consultation and partnership would meet the intent of the Pastoral Council envisaged by the Primate in their Communiqué. We encourage *all* the Instruments of Communion to participate in a discussion with the Presiding Bishop and the leadership of The Episcopal Church to discern a way in which to meet both the intentions behind the proposals in the Dar es Salaam Communiqué and this statement by the House of Bishops. The Archbishop of Canterbury may wish to revisit the work and mandate of “The Panel of Reference” and to explore whether this body, or a reconstituted version of it, may have a part to play in this respect.

On Interventions in the life of The Episcopal Church by Other Jurisdictions

In their Communiqué from Dar es Salaam, the primates acknowledged that a robust scheme of pastoral care for dissenting groups would enable an end to interventions in the life of The Episcopal Church³⁰. The House of Bishops has now addressed the wider Communion on the matter of these interventions.

“Incursions by Uninvited Bishops

We call for an immediate end to diocesan incursions by uninvited bishops in accordance with the Windsor Report and consistent with the statements of past Lambeth Conferences and the Ecumenical Councils of the Church. Such incursions imperil common prayer and long-established ecclesial principles of our Communion. These principles include respect for local jurisdiction and recognition of the geographical boundaries of dioceses and provinces. As we continue to commit ourselves to honor both the spirit and the content of the Windsor Report, we call upon those provinces and bishops engaging in such incursions likewise to honor the Windsor Report by ending them. We offer assurance that delegated episcopal pastoral care is being provided for those who seek it.” (New Orleans Statement, September 2007)

As the Joint Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primate of the Anglican Communion we feel obliged to note that the House of Bishops makes a point here which needs to be addressed urgently in the life of the Communion. In appealing to the statements of Lambeth Conferences and the Ecumenical Councils of the Church, the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church is reminding all Anglicans that we are committed to upholding the principle of local jurisdiction. Not only do the ancient councils of the Church command our respect on this question³¹, but the principle was clearly articulated and

³⁰ Cf. paragraph 32 of the Communiqué quoted above.

³¹ Cf. the decrees of the Council of Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381) and Chalcedon (451). The principle was clearly articulated in Canon 3 of the Western Council of Sardica in 343: “this also should be provided, that a

defended at the time when the very architecture of the Anglican Communion was forged in the early Lambeth Conferences³², as well as being clearly re-iterated and stated in more recent times as tensions have escalated³³.

At Dar es Salaam, the primates said that among the fundamental principles by which they were working was the intention to “affirm the Windsor Report” and to “respect the proper constitutional autonomy of all of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, while upholding the interdependent life and mutual responsibility of the Churches, and the responsibility of each to the Communion as a whole”. In addressing the question of interventions, the Windsor Report recommended:

154. The Anglican Communion upholds the ancient norm of the Church that all the Christians in one place should be united in their prayer, worship and the celebration of the sacraments. The Commission believes that all Anglicans should strive to live out this ideal. Whilst there are instances in the polity of Anglican churches that more than one jurisdiction exists in one place, this is something to be discouraged rather than propagated. We do not therefore favour the establishment of parallel jurisdictions.

155. We call upon those bishops who believe it is their conscientious duty to intervene in provinces, dioceses and parishes other than their own:

- ◆ to express regret for the consequences of their actions
- ◆ to affirm their desire to remain in the Communion, and
- ◆ to effect a moratorium on any further interventions.

We also call upon these archbishops and bishops to seek an accommodation with the bishops of the dioceses whose parishes they have taken into their own care.

As a Joint Standing Committee, we do not see how certain primates can in good conscience call upon The Episcopal Church to meet the recommendations of the Windsor Report while they find reasons to exempt themselves from paying regard to them. We recommend that the Archbishop remind them of their own words and undertakings:

“... we are committed as Primates ... to respect the integrity of each other’s provinces and dioceses ...” (Pastoral Letter, Gramado, May 2003)

“... we reaffirm the teaching of successive Lambeth Conferences that bishops must respect the autonomy and territorial integrity of dioceses and provinces other than their own.” (Statement of the Primates, Lambeth, October 2003)

“... for the period leading up to the next Lambeth Conference ... we commit ourselves neither to encourage nor to initiate cross-boundary interventions.” (Communiqué, Dromantine, February 2005)

“There is an urgent need to embrace the recommendations of the Windsor Report and to bring an end to all interventions.” (Communiqué, Dar es Salaam, February 2007)

In early 2000, the Provinces of Rwanda and South East Asia proceeded to the ordination of three bishops for a “mission initiative” known as the “Anglican Mission in America” in the

bishop do not pass from his own province into another province in which there are bishops; unless, perchance, he has been invited by his brethren, lest we seem to shut the door of charity.

³² Cf. The Lambeth Conference 1878, Encyclical Letter: bishops should not cross boundaries, mission initiatives should not be established without consultation and mutual consent; reiterated in the Encyclical Letter of 1888; in 1897, Resolution 24; and in 1908, Resolutions, 22 and 23

³³ Lambeth Conference 1988, Resolutions 72 and 46; and in 1998, V.13, cf. also III.2; also cf. 1978, Resolution 11, on consultation.

United States. At the time, the 103rd Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to the consecrating bishops and expressed the opinion that he could not regard the bishops then consecrated as “bishops of the Anglican Communion.”³⁴ At the subsequent meeting of the Primates in Oporto in March 2000, the primates stated that “The Archbishop of Canterbury’s letter of 17th February 2000 to the bishops of the Communion expresses a view that is endorsed by this meeting. We are grateful for this clear and decisive response.³⁵” Archbishop George Carey had written: “I cannot recognise their episcopal ministry until such time as a full rapprochement and reconciliation has taken place between them and the appropriate authorities within the Episcopal Church of the United States.³⁶”

The current instances of consecrations which have been taking place in African Provinces with respect to “missionary initiatives” in North America would seem to fall into the same category. We understand that, in addition to contravening the authorities quoted above³⁷, the consecrations took place either without consultation with or even against the counsel of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Windsor Report acknowledged that “principled concerns that have led to those actions³⁸”, and the primates at Dar es Salaam acknowledged that “those Primates who have undertaken interventions do not feel that it is right to end those interventions until it becomes clear that sufficient provision has been made for the life of those persons³⁹” who feel such levels of alienation.

However, we believe that the time is right for a determined effort to bring interventions to an end. The Windsor Report has called upon intervening “archbishops and bishops to seek an accommodation with the bishops of the dioceses whose parishes they have taken into their own care⁴⁰.” We recommend that the Archbishop of Canterbury explore ways of facilitating conversation between these primates and the Presiding Bishop, which may have to include other bishops of the intervening Provinces and the bishops of those dioceses where interventions have taken place, so that the dimensions of the problems faced may be fully articulated and understood, and so that ways forward may be discerned.

The way forward would need to address the adequacy of any scheme of extended pastoral care, and the so-called “Windsor/Camp Allen bishops⁴¹” may also have a key role in winning the confident participation of congregations who have requested such alternative pastoral oversight. The Archbishop may also wish to consider involving some other representatives of the wider Communion, possibly members of the Joint Standing Committee. We still believe that the primates’ call for “healing and reconciliation within The Episcopal Church, between The Episcopal Church and congregations alienated from it, and between The Episcopal Church and the rest of the Anglican Communion⁴²” remains a laudable goal.

³⁴ Letter of 11 February 2000 from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, to Dr Moses Tay, Bishop of Singapore and Emmanuel Kolini, Archbishop of Rwanda.

³⁵ Communiqué of the Primates Meeting, 29 March 2000.

³⁶ Letter of 17 February 2000 from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, to the Bishops of the Anglican Communion and the United Churches.

³⁷ Namely, the decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, and the resolutions of the Lambeth Conferences.

³⁸ The Windsor Report, §149

³⁹ Dar es Salaam Communiqué, §26

⁴⁰ The Windsor Report, §155

⁴¹ The Primates Communiqué at Dar es Salaam identified a number of bishops in The Episcopal Church who had indicated that they accepted both the 1998 Lambeth Resolution 1.10 and the Windsor Report as the way forward for The Episcopal Church, see above.

⁴² Schedule to the Primates’ Communiqué at Dar es Salaam

The Life of Persons of Homosexual Orientation in the Church

The House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church has also drawn attention to the place of gay and lesbian persons within the life of the Church. The House wrote:

The Listening Process

The 1998 Lambeth Conference called all the provinces of the Anglican Communion to engage in a "listening process" designed to bring gay and lesbian Anglicans fully into the Church's conversation about human sexuality. We look forward to receiving initial reports about this process at the 2008 Lambeth Conference and to participating with others in this crucial enterprise. We are aware that in some cultural contexts conversation concerning homosexuality is difficult. We see an important role for the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) in this listening process, since it represents both the lay and ordained members of our constituent churches, and so is well-placed to engage every part of the body in this conversation. We encourage the ACC to identify the variety of resources needed to accomplish these conversations.

Justice and Dignity for Gay and Lesbian Persons

It is of fundamental importance that, as we continue to seek consensus in matters of human sexuality, we also be clear and outspoken in our shared commitment to establish and protect the civil rights of gay and lesbian persons, and to name and oppose at every turn any action or policy that does violence to them, encourages violence toward them, or violates their dignity as children of God. We call all our partners in the Anglican Communion to recommit to this effort. As we stated at the conclusion of our meeting in March 2007: "We proclaim the Gospel of what God has done and is doing in Christ, of the dignity of every human being, and of justice, compassion and peace. We proclaim the Gospel that in Christ there is no Jew or Greek, no male or female, no slave or free. We proclaim the Gospel that in Christ all God's children, including women, are full and equal participants in the life of Christ's Church. We proclaim the Gospel that in Christ all God's children, including gay and lesbian persons, are full and equal participants in the life of Christ's Church. We proclaim the Gospel that stands against any violence, including violence done to women and children as well as those who are persecuted because of their differences, often in the name of God."

We note that the 1998 Lambeth Conference articulated in Resolution 1.10 the widely accepted teaching for the Communion. Lambeth Conference Resolutions do not have "magisterial" force in the Anglican Communion; that is, they are not *per se* binding on the faithful of the Churches of the Anglican Communion. Nevertheless, Resolution 1.10 expresses the understanding on Christian marriage and sexual relationships actually taught and held by the vast majority of Anglican churches and bishops across the globe – indeed, by the vast majority of Christian denominations and their leadership.

It is the call to pay heed to this teaching that is at the centre of our current disputes. The primates noted at Dar es Salaam, "What has been quite clear throughout this period is that the 1998 Lambeth Resolution 1.10 is the standard of teaching which is presupposed in the

Windsor Report and from which the primates have worked.⁴³” The Lambeth Resolution 1.10 stated that:

“in view of the teaching of Scripture, [this Conference] upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union, and believes that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage⁴⁴”

In addition, the resolution also goes on to say,

[This Conference] recognises that there are among us persons who experience themselves as having a homosexual orientation. Many of these are members of the Church and are seeking the pastoral care, moral direction of the Church, and God’s transforming power for the living of their lives and the ordering of relationships. We commit ourselves to listen to the experience of homosexual persons and we wish to assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ; [This Conference], while rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture, calls on all our people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals, violence within marriage and any trivialisation and commercialisation of sex. [This Conference] requests the Primates and the ACC to establish a means of monitoring the work done on the subject of human sexuality in the Communion and to share statements and resources among us⁴⁵.

Likewise, the primates have stated,

“We also wish to make it quite clear that in our discussion and assessment of the moral appropriateness of specific human behaviours, we continue unreservedly to be committed to the pastoral support and care of homosexual people. The victimisation or diminishment of human beings whose affections happen to be ordered towards people of the same sex is anathema to us. We assure homosexual people that they are children of God, loved and valued by him, and deserving of the best we can give of pastoral care and friendship⁴⁶”

and

“The 1998 Lambeth Resolution 1.10, committed the Provinces “to listen to the experience of homosexual persons” and called “all our people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals”. The initiation of this process of listening was requested formally by the Primates at Dromantine⁴⁷ and commissioned by ACC-13. ... We wish to affirm this work in collating various research studies, statements and other material from the Provinces. We look forward to this material being made more fully available across the Communion for study and reflection, and to the preparation of material to assist the bishops at 2008 Lambeth Conference.

⁴³ Dar es Salaam Communiqué, §11

⁴⁴ Resolution I.10, section 2

⁴⁵ 1998 Lambeth Resolution I.10, sections 3, 4 and 6.

⁴⁶ Statement by the Primates. Dromantine, February 2005, §6

⁴⁷ Statement by the Primates. Dromantine, February 2005, §17

The Windsor Report stated:

“We remind all in the Communion that Lambeth Resolution 1.10 calls for an ongoing process of listening and discernment, and that Christians of good will need to be prepared to engage honestly and frankly with each other on issues relating to human sexuality. It is vital that the Communion establish processes and structures to facilitate ongoing discussion. One of the deepest realities that the Communion faces is continuing difference on the presenting issue of ministry by and to persons who openly engage in sexually active homosexual relationships. Whilst this report criticises those who have propagated change without sufficient regard to the common life of the Communion, it has to be recognised that debate on this issue cannot be closed whilst sincerely but radically different positions continue to be held across the Communion. The later sections of Lambeth Resolution 1.10 cannot be ignored any more than the first section, as the primates have noted. Moreover, any demonising of homosexual persons, or their ill treatment, is totally against Christian charity and basic principles of pastoral care. We urge provinces to be pro-active in support of the call of Lambeth Resolution 64 (1988) for them to “reassess, in the light of ... study and because of our concern for human rights, its care for and attitude toward persons of homosexual orientation”.⁴⁸

The life of the Anglican Communion has been much damaged in recent years following the tensions raised by the consecration in The Episcopal Church of a bishop living in a committed same-sex relationship and the authorisation in some dioceses of Rites of Blessing for same-sex unions. With the response of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church in September 2007, the Communion should move towards closure on these matters, at least for the time being. The Communion seems to be converging around a position which says that while it is inappropriate to proceed to public Rites of Blessing of same-sex unions and to the consecration of bishops who are living in sexual relationships outside of Christian marriage⁴⁹, we need to take seriously our ministry to gay and lesbian people inside the Church and the ending of discrimination, persecution and violence against them. Here, The Episcopal Church and the Instruments of Communion speak with one voice. The process of mutual listening and conversation needs to be intensified. It is only by living in communion that we can live out our vocation to be Communion.

⁴⁸ The Windsor Report, §146

⁴⁹ cf. The Primates Statement at Dromantine, February 2005, §18

The present text was developed from the remarks of JSC members in New Orleans and in consultation with them.

In electronic correspondence, the following members of the Joint Standing Committee have signified their assent to this text:

- ◆ Phillip Aspinall, Primate of Australia, Primates' Standing Committee
- ◆ Barry Morgan, Primate of Wales, Primates' Standing Committee
- ◆ Katharine Jefferts Schori, Primate of The Episcopal Church, Primates' Standing Committee
- ◆ John Paterson, Chairman of the Anglican Consultative Council and of the ACC Standing Committee
- ◆ George Koshy, Vice-Chair, ACC and Standing Committee
- ◆ Robert Fordham, ACC Standing Committee
- ◆ Kumara Illangasinghe, ACC Standing Committee
- ◆ Elizabeth Paver, ACC Standing Committee **
- ◆ James Tengtenga, ACC Standing Committee
- ◆ Nomfundo Walaza, ACC Standing Committee

The following members have signified dissent:

- ◆ Mouneer Anis, Primate of Jerusalem and the Middle East, Primates' Standing Committee . *(The text of Bishop Mouneer's submission is attached as an addendum.)*

Responses have not yet been received from:

- ◆ Philippa Amable, ACC Standing Committee
- ◆ Jolly Babirukamu, ACC Standing Committee

** Following communication from Canon Paver her name has been moved to those who assented to the document.

Revised. Thursday, 4th October, 2007

Addendum

Assessment of the response the House of Bishops of TEC to the Windsor Report and Dar El Salam recommendation

First, I would like to thank the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church in America (TEC) for her kind invitation and for the great hospitality we enjoyed while we were in New Orleans. I am also grateful for the opportunity I was given to address the House of Bishops (HOB).

It is very unfortunate that not all the members of the Joint Standing Committee (JSC) were present when a response to the HOB of TEC was drafted. The lack of discussion and interaction will not produce a report that expresses the view of the whole committee.

The response of the House of Bishops of TEC represents a **superficial shift** from their previous position; the fact remains that their position since 2003 has not changed. The House of Bishops has not responded positively to either the Windsor Report or the Dar El Salam Primates recommendation.

Therefore **I strongly disagree** with the report of the JSC which states that *"We believe that the Episcopal Church has clarified all outstanding questions relating to their response to the questions directed explicitly to them, and on which clarifications were sought by the 30th of September, and given the necessary assurance sought of them."* The reasons for my disagreement are as follows:

On Public Rites for Blessing of Same-sex Unions

The statement of the House of Bishops in New Orleans did not meet the request of Windsor Report that the *"Bishops must declare a moratorium on all such public rites"*. It also failed to meet the request of the Primates at Dar El Salam that the Bishops should *"make an unequivocal common covenant that the Bishops will not authorize any rites of blessing for same-sex unions in their Diocese."*

They did not declare a **moratorium** on authorization public rites of the blessing of same-sex unions. Instead the House of Bishops **pledged** not to authorize any public rites of blessing of same-sex unions. I understand moratorium as "cessation of activity". In the explanatory discussion they mentioned that "the **majority**", **not all**, of Bishops do not make allowances for the blessings of same-sex unions. This means that a number of Bishops will continue to make allowances for the blessing of same-sex unions. I see this as an **equivocal and unclear response**.

While the House of Bishop's response means that 'authorization' of the rites will not take place, but it also stated that some will continue to *"explore and experience liturgies celebrating the blessing of same-sex unions"*. The exploration of liturgies celebrating the blessing of same-sex unions, keeps a window to continue such blessings under another title !! This unashamedly disregards the standard teaching of the Anglican Communion which is still torn over this issue.

On the elections non-celibate gay and lesbian persons to the Episcopate

Those who read the whole response of the House of Bishops of TEC, not only parts of it, would find the following.

- The House of Bishops clarified Resolution B033 of the General Convention 2006 in such a way that *"non-celibate gay and lesbian persons are included in the restraint"*. But in the same response we find them saying *"We proclaim the Gospel that in Christ all God's children, including gay and lesbian persons, are full and equal participants in the life of Christ's Church."* What does this mean? This statement **contradicts** their explanation of B033 which put a *restraint* on electing and consecrating *non-celibate gay and lesbian persons* to the Episcopate Order, as it restricts them from full participation in the church.
- The request of the House of Bishops to the Archbishop of Canterbury to explore ways for Gene Robinson to fully participate in Lambeth Conference demonstrates clearly that they see that the manner of life of Gene Robinson, as a non-celibate gay, *does not present a challenge to the wider church and will not lead to further strains on the Communion*. This again **contradicts** their clarification of General Convention Resolution B033 that it does indeed refer *"to non-celibate gay and lesbian persons"*.

On the Pastoral Scheme

In regard to the recommendation of Dar El Salam Primates Meeting, for the establishment of a Pastoral Council "to act on behalf of the Primates in consultation with the Episcopal Church", the House of Bishops did not respond positively. Their excuse was that *such a pastoral scheme would compromise the authority of the Presiding Bishop, and place the autonomy of the Episcopal Church at risk*.

The House of Bishops came up with another internal plan that allows the Presiding Bishop to appoint Episcopal visitors for Dioceses that 'request' alternative oversight. This is completely different from the Pastoral scheme recommended by Dar El Salam. The composition of the recommended pastoral scheme has the ability to stop the interventions of outside Provinces because it represents TEC, the Primates, and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Suspending all Legal Actions

The Primates in Dar El Salam urged the representatives of TEC and of those congregations in property disputes with TEC to suspend all legal actions against each other. The House of Bishops did not address this issue.

Conclusion

The House of Bishops did not respond meet the recommendation of Windsor Report and the Dar El Salam Primates Meeting Communiqué. Instead they used ambiguous language and contradicted themselves within their own response.

Mouneer Hanna Anis.