

Church of the Ascension, The Episcopal Church, and the Anglican Communion

A Report by
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The Church in Tension

This summer, as the U.S. Supreme Court released its decision redefining the institution of marriage, the General Convention (GC) of The Episcopal Church (TEC) changed its canon law, redefining the Christian understanding of Holy Matrimony between one man and one woman to that of a union between two parties, thus permitting (but not requiring) American clergy to officiate on behalf of the State for same-sex couples.

Advocates in TEC favoring the change have sought to justify their position by pointing to our baptismal vows to respect the dignity of every human being, claiming the Holy Spirit has now revealed to them a new teaching that supersedes 2000 years of Christian practice. Those who continue to hold to the classic understanding of Holy Matrimony also point to our baptismal vows, particularly to continue in the apostles teaching and fellowship. That teaching and fellowship, what we call the historic Faith and Order of the Church which clergy (especially bishops) are called to uphold, is what most in the greater Anglican Communion (AC) consider to be at stake.

Two weeks ago, the leaders of the churches across the Anglican Communion gathered at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, to determine whether TEC departed from the common teaching and fellowship by redefining Holy Matrimony against the repeated requests and warnings of the Communion to refrain from doing so.

To be clear, the Anglican Communion is and continues to be a religious voice across the globe against the prejudice and violence perpetrated against gay people. This has not always been the case; in fact, the Communion's leaders expressed their regret and recommitted themselves saying,

"The Primates condemned homophobic prejudice and violence and resolved to work together to offer pastoral care and loving service irrespective of sexual orientation. This conviction arises out of our discipleship of Jesus Christ. The

Primates reaffirmed their rejection of criminal sanctions against same-sex attracted people.

The Primates recognise that the Christian church and within it the Anglican Communion have often acted in a way towards people on the basis of their sexual orientation that has caused deep hurt. Where this has happened they express their profound sorrow and affirm again that God's love for every human being is the same, regardless of their sexuality, and that the church should never by its actions give any other impression" (Appendix E).

As bishops who vow to uphold the historic Faith and Order of the Church and whose very office of bishop links diocese to diocese making the Communion a communion, the Primates then considered the recent decisions of the American church in light of actions that have taken place over the last 13 years.

It is important to keep in mind that, since 2003 and the consecration of a partnered gay priest as Bishop of NH and subsequent moves by the American church to experiment then formalize liturgies for same-sex relationships, the Anglican Communion has generally maintained its adherence to the classic understanding of Holy Matrimony expressed at the 1998 Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops worldwide (see Appendix A). Moreover, the Anglican communion has repeatedly sought to respect the American church's own rightful space to make its own internal decisions, hoping it might continue to walk together with the rest of the Communion (see Appendix B). Meanwhile, as the Communion waited on the American church, Anglican churches have suffered, not simply in terms of broken ecumenical relationships but also with respect to violence on the part of extremists who lump traditional Anglicans with the Americans with whom they themselves disagree. Churches in Africa and the Middle East have been bombed and burned. In America, tens of millions of dollars have been spent in litigation over church properties as parishes and dioceses have sought to realign themselves with traditional Anglicans. Pain and distrust has been felt on all sides.

After more than 12 years of trying to find a way forward together, the Primates met this month to consider the consequences of the Americans' unilateral departure from the classic teaching of Holy Matrimony. The Primates were unanimous in their desire to walk together; so, contrary to misleading reports that TEC was excommunicated or suspended, it was not. Rather, the overwhelming majority of the Primates considered the GC's change in the Canon on marriage to be "a departure from the mutual accountability and interdependence implied through being in a relationship with each other in the Anglican Communion."

Since this was an acknowledged departure from Anglican practice, the Primates decided a number of consequences; namely, for the next three years, TEC will not be permitted represent the AC on ecumenical and interfaith bodies, be appointed or elected to any internal

standing committee that might speak on behalf of the Communion, or to take part in decision making on any matter of church doctrine or polity. In other words, they may have voice but no vote on such matters. After years of trying to seek reconciliation with TEC, the Primates provided the next three years in the hope that, at its 2018 GC, TEC might reconsider its actions, seek to restore its relationship and rebuild trust with the larger Communion. However, initial responses by PB Michael Curry, the GC's House of Deputies President, Gay Clark Jennings, and the majority of American bishops indicate that, for the moment, they have no desire to reconsider TEC's redefinition of marriage.

Here at Home

The Episcopal Church of the Ascension is a parish of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana, a diocese of TEC. As our Church's Constitution begins, TEC "is a constituent member of the Anglican Communion, a Fellowship of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church ...in communion with the See of Canterbury, upholding and propagating the historic Faith and Order as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer." Our BCP's rubric on the Rite of Holy Matrimony begins, "Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God." When the liturgy begins, the celebrant summarizes two millennia of Christian belief and practice saying,

"Dearly beloved: We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of this man and this woman in Holy Matrimony. The bond and covenant of marriage was established by God in creation, and our Lord Jesus Christ adorned this manner of life by his presence and first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. It signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and Holy Scripture commends it to be honored among all people.

The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God."

No question, the recent canonical change (1) differs from the rite and rubrics of the Prayer Book, (2) departs from historic Christian teaching and practice, (3) forces bishops and presbyters to choose sides and (4) will cause needless confusion, acrimony and pain.

Let me explain: When an ordinand is presented for Holy Orders, the bishop asks, "Will you be loyal to the doctrine, discipline and worship of Christ as this Church *has received them*?" Notice, we *receive* what has been passed down. Of course, our understanding of what we have received will develop but we do not invent. The sheer novelty of the new canon creates difficulty for the ordinand who is then asked by the bishop, "And will you, in accordance with the canons of this church, obey your bishop and other ministers who may have authority over you and your work?" Now, to be clear, the canon in question grants the clergy authority to decline to officiate the marriage of any couple; nevertheless, the change in the doctrine of Holy Matrimony remains a doctrine to which an ordinand vows to conform, a canon that contradicts the BCP. Before the General Convention, I communicated this with our deputies to GC and our bishop but with no effect (see Appendix C).

For the last twelve years, the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana has been spared of the painful public divisions among American Episcopalians visible elsewhere. It remains to be seen what effect these changes will have within our diocese as parishes begin to formalize and bless same-sex relationships.

As I have said before, Church of the Ascension cannot be defined, distracted, or divided by this issue. The Church of the Ascension, its clergy and ministries remain faithful to the Christian Church's historic Faith and Order upheld by the greater Anglican Communion. And, with the Anglican Communion, we too condemn homophobic prejudice and violence and will continue to offer pastoral care and loving service irrespective of sexual orientation. This conviction also arises out of our discipleship of Jesus Christ through our understanding of the gospel (see Appendix D).

One of the developments of the Primates meeting was the full inclusion of the Archbishop of Anglican Church of North America (ACNA), a body of American and Canadian churches associated with many churches across the AC but not a formal member of the Communion. ACNA formed in response to parishes and dioceses that could no longer remain within TEC or the Anglican Church of Canada, either by its own conviction of conscience or by necessity due to the hostilities of bishops who forced compliance to their own agendas. At present, ACNA is not a constituent member of the AC although most churches recognize its clergy as Anglican, including the See of the Canterbury. ACNA has not yet applied to be recognized as a constituent member of the AC and it is uncertain if and when this will occur. To put it rather crudely, ACNA has the Faith without the Order and TEC has the Order without the Faith; and now that place within the Order has been diminished.

It is highly doubtful that TEC will walk away from the AC *as an entire body*. There are indications that dioceses, their bishops, even individual parishes within TEC that seek to remain to walk together with the rest of the AC will be enabled to do so with recognition by the AC. Exactly how this will occur is yet unknown. It is possible that there will be effectively two

tiers within the Anglican Communion: the first tier will be those churches, dioceses and parishes that are full constituent members with voice and vote while a second tier is granted voice or observer status. Whatever the structure, it is important that Ascension remains a full constituent member of the Anglican Communion in communion with the See of Canterbury, upholding and propagating the historic Faith and Order as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.

Ascension's relationships with other churches in the Communion remain strong. In Uganda, we continue in the ministry of providing education, medical care, food and housing for the Batwa. In Jordan, Israel and the West Bank, we continue to support the education of Christian students. The churches in these regions fully recognize Church of the Ascension and continue to pray for us as we share in these ministries together. For over a century, Ascension has grown to become a sizeable parish that has made a tremendous impact in our own community and across the globe. It is important to remain a vibrant voice of Classic Christianity within our diocese and seek to demonstrate this vibrancy for the Church and the World. And this happens only when parishioners and clergy live out their baptismal vows of faith in love to Christ and in service of His gospel for the sake of His one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

APPENDIX A

Resolution 1.10 Human Sexuality

The Lambeth Conference 1998

"This Conference:

1. commends to the Church the subsection report on human sexuality;
2. in view of the teaching of Scripture, 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 marriage;
3. 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;
4. 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;
5. cannot advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions"

Approved by a vote of 526 in favour and 70 against, with 45 abstentions

APPENDIX B

Communion responses to TEC

The Windsor Report 2004: Conclusion

"There remains a very real danger that we will not choose to walk together. Should the call to halt and find ways of continuing in our present communion not be heeded, then we shall have to begin to learn to walk apart. We would much rather not speculate on actions that might need to be taken if, after acceptance by the primates, our recommendations are not implemented. However, we note that there are, in any human dispute, courses that may be followed: processes of mediation and arbitration; non-invitation to relevant representative bodies and meetings; invitation, but to observer status only; and, as an absolute last resort, withdrawal from membership. We earnestly hope that none of these will prove necessary. Our aim throughout has been to work not for division but for healing and restoration. The real challenge of the gospel is whether we live deeply enough in the love of Christ, and care sufficiently for our joint work to bring that love to the world, that we will "make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4.3). As the primates stated in 2000, "to turn from one another would be to turn away from the Cross", and indeed from serving the world which God loves and for which Jesus Christ died."

Primates Communique 2005: Dromantine, Ireland

"Many primates have been deeply alarmed that the standard of Christian teaching on matters of human sexuality expressed in the 1998 Lambeth Resolution 1.10, which should command respect as the position overwhelmingly adopted by the bishops of the Anglican Communion, has been seriously undermined by the recent developments in North America. At the same time, it is acknowledged that these developments within the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Anglican Church of Canada have proceeded entirely in accordance with their constitutional processes and requirements. 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 friendship.

We welcome the general thrust of the Windsor Report as offering a way forward for the mutual life of our Communion"

Primates Communique 2007: Dar Es Salam, Tanzania

"Since the controversial events of 2003, we have faced the reality of increased tension in the life of the Anglican Communion - tension so deep that the fabric of our common life together has been torn.

...At the heart of our tensions is the belief that The Episcopal Church has departed from the standard of teaching on human sexuality accepted by the Communion in the 1998 Lambeth Resolution 1.10 by consenting to the episcopal election of a candidate living in a committed same-sex relationship, and by

permitting Rites of Blessing for same-sex unions. The episcopal ministry of a person living in a same-sex relationship is not acceptable to the majority of the Communion.

...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."

Primates Communique 2009: Alexandria, Egypt

"There are continuing deep differences especially over the issues of the election of bishops in same-gender unions, Rites of Blessing for same-sex unions, and on cross-border interventions. The moratoria, requested by the Windsor Report and reaffirmed by the majority of bishops at the Lambeth Conference, were much discussed. If a way forward is to be found and mutual trust to be re-established, it is imperative that further aggravation and acts which cause offence, misunderstanding or hostility cease. While we are aware of the depth of conscientious conviction involved, the position of the Communion defined by the Lambeth 1998 Resolution 1.10 in its entirety remains, and gracious restraint on all three fronts is urgently needed to open the way for transforming conversation."

APPENDIX C

Letter to the GC 2015 Deputies



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH *of* THE ASCENSION

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June 17, 2015

Dear Members of the Deputation of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana,

You are in my prayers for the upcoming General Convention. The travel is far. The hours are long. The work is important. So I pray for strength, stamina, and wisdom.

As you prepare, I want to share some thoughts about a proposed change to our canons, A036, that I trust is familiar to you. I am concerned the proposed canon will foist a redefinition of the classic understanding of Christian marriage and pit itself against that historic Faith and Order expressed in the rites and rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, a constitutional document of this Church. Pitting our church's canons against our Book of Common Prayer will create a crisis of Faith and Order. Bishops and presbyters will, by conscience, either enforce the canon or dissent.

With the recent changes in The Episcopal Church, two millennia of Christian teaching and practice is being redefined and become optional for dioceses and their parishes. What was always beyond our historic Faith and Order is now optional. A036 now seeks to codify this change, redefining Christian matrimony contrary to our Book of Common Prayer. I do not foresee any possible amendment redefining Christ's teaching on the nature of matrimony that might avoid problems.

For the last twelve years, the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana has been spared of the painful public divisions among American Episcopalians visible elsewhere. It remains to be seen what effect recent changes that grant parishes to celebrate same sex blessings will have within this diocese. However, these proposed canonical changes will (1) differ from the rites and rubrics of the Prayer Book, (2) depart from historic Christian teaching and practice, (3) force bishops and presbyters to choose sides and (4) cause needless confusion, acrimony and pain.

I ask that you, the duly elected Deputies of our diocese for the good of the greater Church, carefully consider the counsel of the Rt. Rev. Scott Benhase, Bishop of Georgia, and the Rt. Rev. Dorsey McConnell, Bishop of Pittsburgh:

"Should the 78th General Convention produce a lasting witness to our faith and order, it will be by fulfilling our charge to take orderly counsel with all due care. In 2012, through the approval of provisional rites, we created an open space that has proven enormously helpful in allowing freedom and protecting conscience. Can we build on this now, in a way that embraces all our sisters and brothers? In this more excellent way, we model for one another our Lord's love for us, and become ambassadors of reconciliation — in our church, in the Anglican Communion, and in the wider body of Christ" ("A More Excellent Way," *The Living Church*, 6/10/2015).

With prayers and blessings,
The Reverend Joseph E. Daly, Rector

APPENDIX D

A sermon on Jesus, Marriage and Family preached by the Rev'd Joseph Daly, 10/4/2015

TEXT: Mark 10:2-16

My favorite church nursery is in Christ Church, Frederica, on Saint Simons Island, Ga. Christ Church was started by John Wesley. Its nursery has a wonderful mural painted by a parishioner, a retired cartoonist and editor of *Mad Magazine*. The length of the wall is covered with precocious children, some mischievous, some downright bratty. In the center sits Jesus on a large rock, head in hands, grimacing. And the caption reads, "*Suffer the little children to come unto me!*" It's a wonderfully humorous caption that puzzles every helicopter mom who drops off her innocent genius for the first time.

That humor and honesty was demonstrated by Pope Francis last week in Philadelphia. As the press reported, the pope tossed away his prepared remarks and he commenced with an impromptu basic theology of marriage, giving the big picture, tracing back to Creation which begins with a family and moving to Redemption where God begins again with a family. It was truly splendid. Then he added, "Ah, but I know what many of you are thinking! You say all these wonderful things about marriage and family but you're a priest; you're not married! Marriage can be hard. Plates can fly! Children can be a headache! And I won't even begin to speak of Mother-in-law!"

It was terrific, not simply for the candid humor but for tracing back the big picture of marriage and family. Jesus employs the same strategy in today's gospel. His understanding of marriage and family was *not universally shared* by everyone, everywhere, not even among his own disciples much less his own people.

I was reminded of Jesus' radical teaching on marriage and family a few years ago when I observed orphans begging for change on streets of Jordan. These orphans were sent out by their mothers, mothers who were divorced by their husbands who were already allowed up to four wives and could be easily sent to the streets with their children.

I was reminded again of Jesus' teaching this week as I listened to a local teacher tell me of a troubled student, a beautiful little girl, 8 years old. Her American parents adopted her from an orphanage in China three years ago. She often becomes easily frustrated, displays fits of anger and lots of tears.

Her adoptive mother told the teacher that, not long after she arrived in her new home they noticed she would wrap her dolls in newspaper and put them outside her bedroom door. As she told her teacher, "*I would hold the little babies but sometimes they would just die.*"

Unwanted. Unloved. Pushed away. Who speaks for these children? Who speaks for them in a world where they and their mothers are thrown to the streets without recourse? *Jesus does*. He says, "*Let them come to me. These are the little ones the King receives into his kingdom.*"

The setting of today's text is important. Unfortunately, it's been cut out of our reading but it's vital to get the big picture. It occurs in the same area where John baptized Jesus, the other side of the Jordan, the territory of Herod Antipas who arrested, imprisoned and executed John for speaking out against Herod's second marriage with his mistress, who both invoked Roman law to divorce their spouses, causing a terrible political scandal.

Jesus is thrown a political hot potato by the religious leaders to trap him and, hopefully, get in the same trouble as his cousin, John. I get this occasionally, sometimes from parishioners, sometimes from the press: *What do you think?* And my response is, "*Well, what do you think?*" Because, really, that's all they're really interested in anyway: telling me what *they* think!

Jesus does the same.

"What's your position on divorce and remarriage, Jesus?! Is it lawful or not?"

"Well, you tell me. What does the law say?"

"Moses allowed a man to write a divorce certificate and dismiss her."

"*Yes,*" says Jesus, "*but that provision was only because your hard, stubborn hearts.* But that's not how God intended it. What's *the original* command? From the dawn of creation, God made them male and female:

"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' Not two, but one flesh. So what God has joined together, let no one separate."

Jesus dismisses all rabbinic tradition, exposing the loophole that allowed men (and only men, by the way) to divorce their wives for anything from infidelity to ruining dinner to "*I met someone who really gets me.*"

For Jesus, serial monogamy is legalized adultery--*doesn't matter if it's the man or the woman, no difference*--and the disciples are astonished.

The religious leaders would selectively pick and choose the bit of law they liked but cut out the big picture, the original intent of marriage. Women were not chattel for personal gratification: "*She makes me happy.*"

Genesis was forgotten and misunderstood: woman wasn't made for man, man and woman are made for *each other*, *one* flesh created *equally* in God's image to image his love in the world as they create and procreate.

150 years after Mark's text was written, Tertullian, a Roman lawyer turned theologian, commented on the originality of Christian marriage.

"Truly they are two in one flesh. Together they pray, together bow down...mutually teaching, mutually entreating, mutually upholding. In the church of God they hold an equal place. They stand equally at the banquet of God, equally in crises, equally facing persecutions and equally in refreshments. Neither hides anything from the other. Neither neglects the other. Neither is troublesome to the other."

Now, to tear *that* apart tears *us* apart, body and soul, man and wife, children and parents, entire families and communities. And there is nothing good about that.

But be clear here: Jesus is NOT locking people within abusive marriages where the hardness of a person's heart has made marriage a living hell. It is those very ones ripped apart that he welcomes into the arms of his kingdom: from the innocent child to the jilted lover *even* the adulterer, he calls them to himself in mercy.

I emphasize this only because, sadly, the Christian church has a history of selectively picking and choosing passages that forbid divorce and double their pain, allowing only an annulment, making the marriage and their children illegitimate, or else be forbidden from sharing at the banquet table where Jesus calls them for refreshment and forgiveness.

Now, today, we find ourselves in a church where there are pockets of priests and bishops who have made a similar error but who, now, in the opposite direction, are trailing in the wake of current cultural trends. Less than 1%, still, they are selectively picking and choosing passages, ignoring the big picture, redefining Jesus' teaching on marriage, so broadening it that it loses its original intent and design. That won't do either. It's just as wrong.

So what are we to do?

The real struggle over marriage isn't in the legislature or in the courts or in the public eye of the media. The real struggle is within us, our own hardness of heart. We say, "*What God has joined together let no one put asunder*" yet Christian divorce rates are no better than anyone else. We say, "*What God has joined together let no one put asunder*" but we've let our anger and pride put it asunder, let our careers put it asunder, let our selfish lusts put it asunder.

There isn't a single person here who hasn't been hurt in some way, at some level, by love that's been sabotaged and ripped apart--in marriage, outside of marriage--*love* spurned, love betrayed, love that has been twisted and abused. The miracle is, for all we've done to ourselves and to others, Jesus doesn't shun us. He calls us.

So I'm not interested in a culture war. We are Christ's body, his Church. We are called to be peacemakers *not culture warriors*. But in seeking peace and pursuing it, it doesn't mean that we simply keep our peace in abject silence, embarrassed by Jesus and his message of faithfulness in marriage, worried we might be seen as *unsophisticated* or *intolerant*.

We're called to live Christ's message, *not just talk about it*, to show Christ's love to our wives, to your husbands, to our children, to all, *not just some*, all--*married, single, divorced, heterosexual or homosexual*. We must show compassion, *compassion*, not condescension. As disciples of Jesus we cannot condemn; "*for in Christ there is no condemnation*," says Paul. Nor can we bless or condone any relationship Jesus himself wouldn't. So, in the face of such brokenness, we neither condemn nor condone.

Instead, we are compelled by Christ, and his love for us, to show his love to all those like us who come up short of the good God intended and are just as broken; to people, God's children, who scream out in frustration like a little girl in deep psychic pain, alone, unwanted, longing to be loved, not shamed or humiliated, but loved with mercy and compassion ...just like you.

"Don't stop them," says Jesus, "Let them come to me for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it."

And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

APPENDIX E

Walking Together in the Service of God in the World

15 January 2016

The meeting of Anglican Primates, the senior bishops of the 38 Anglican Provinces, joined by the Archbishop of the Anglican Church of North America, took place in Canterbury between Monday 11 January and Friday 15 January at the invitation of Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury. The first morning was spent in prayer and fasting.

We came knowing that the 2016 Primates' meeting would be concerned with the differences among us in regard to our teaching on matters of human sexuality. We were also eager to address wider areas of concern.

The meeting started by agreeing the agenda. The first agreed item was to discuss an important point of contention among Anglicans worldwide: the recent change to the doctrine of marriage by The Episcopal Church in the USA.

Over the past week the unanimous decision of the Primates was to walk together, however painful this is, and despite our differences, as a deep expression of our unity in the body of Christ. We looked at what that meant in practical terms.

We received the recommendation of a working group of our members which took up the task of how our Anglican Communion of Churches might walk together and our unity be strengthened. Their work, consistent with previous statements of the Primates' meetings, addressed what consequences follow for The Episcopal Church in relation to the Anglican Communion following its recent change of marriage doctrine. The recommendations in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Addendum A below are:

“It is our unanimous desire to walk together. However given the seriousness of these matters we formally acknowledge this distance by requiring that for a period of three years The Episcopal Church no longer represent us on ecumenical and interfaith bodies, should not be appointed or elected to an internal standing committee and that while participating in the internal bodies of the Anglican Communion, they will not take part in decision making on any issues pertaining to doctrine or polity.

“We have asked the Archbishop of Canterbury to appoint a Task Group to maintain conversation among ourselves with the intention of restoration of relationship, the rebuilding of mutual trust, healing the legacy of hurt, recognising the extent of our commonality and exploring our deep differences, ensuring they are held between us in the love and grace of Christ.”

These recommendations were adopted by the majority of the Primates present.

We will develop this process so that it can also be applied when any unilateral decisions on matters of doctrine and polity are taken that threaten our unity.

The Primates condemned homophobic prejudice and violence and resolved to work together to offer pastoral care and loving service irrespective of sexual orientation. This conviction arises out of our discipleship of Jesus Christ. The Primates reaffirmed their rejection of criminal sanctions against same-sex attracted people.

The Primates recognise that the Christian church and within it the Anglican Communion have often acted in a way towards people on the basis of their sexual orientation that has caused deep hurt. Where this has happened they express their profound sorrow and affirm again that God's love for every human being is the same, regardless of their sexuality, and that the church should never by its actions give any other impression.

We affirmed the consultation that had taken place in preparation for the meeting by Archbishop Welby and commended his approach for future events within the Communion.

The consideration of the required application for admission to membership of the Communion of the Anglican Church of North America was recognised as properly belonging to the Anglican Consultative Council. The Primates recognise that such an application, were it to come forward, would raise significant questions of polity and jurisdiction.

In the wake of the climate change conference in Paris last month, the meeting heard about a petition of almost two million signatures co-ordinated by the Anglican Environment Network. Reports were made about moves to divest from fossil fuels, the expansion of the African Deserts and the struggle for survival of the peoples of the Pacific as island life is threatened in many places by the rise of sea levels.

The meeting discussed the reality of religiously motivated violence and its impact on people and communities throughout the world. Primates living in places where such violence is a daily reality spoke movingly and passionately about their circumstances and the effect on their members. The Archbishop of Canterbury himself has taken important initiatives in bringing people together from a range of faith communities globally for discussion and mutual accountability. The Anglican Primates repudiated any religiously motivated violence and expressed solidarity with all who suffer from this evil in the world today.

The Primates look forward to the proposal being brought to the Anglican Consultative Council for comprehensive child protection measures to be available throughout all the churches of the Communion.

In a presentation on evangelism, the Primates rejoiced that the Church of Jesus Christ lives to bear witness to the transforming power of the love of God in Jesus Christ. The Primates were energised by the opportunity to share experiences of evangelism and motivated to evangelise with their people.

“The Primates joyfully commit themselves and the Anglican Church, to proclaim throughout the world the person and work of Jesus Christ, unceasingly and authentically, inviting all to embrace the beauty and joy of the Gospel.”

(See Addendum B.)

The Primates supported the Archbishop of Canterbury in his proposal to call a Lambeth Conference in 2020.

Primates discussed tribalism, ethnicity, nationalism and patronage networks, and the deep evil of corruption. They reflected that these issues become inextricably connected to war and violence, and derive from poverty. They agreed to ask the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion to commission a study for the next Primates’ meeting. The Primates agreed to meet again in 2017 and 2019.

The Primates owe a debt of gratitude to the staff of the Anglican Communion Office, and especially the Secretary General, to the staff at Lambeth Palace and at Church House Westminster. The Primates were especially grateful for the warm welcome, generous hospitality and kindness offered by the Dean of Canterbury and all at the Cathedral. Their contribution was very important in setting the mood of the meeting in prayer and mutual listening. Thanks to the Community of St Anselm for their prayer, help and support, Jean Vanier for his inspiring addresses, and the Community of St Gregory for the loan of the crozier head to sit alongside the St Augustine gospels.

The Primates received their time together as a gift from God and experienced many signs of God's presence amongst us. They appreciated the personal care and humility shown by the Archbishop of Canterbury especially in his chairing of the meeting. We leave our week together enriched by the communion we share and strengthened by the faithful witness of Anglicans across the world. The Primates deeply appreciate the prayers of many throughout the world over our time together.

Addendum A

1. We gathered as Anglican Primates to pray and consider how we may preserve our unity in Christ given the ongoing deep differences that exist among us concerning our understanding of marriage.
2. Recent developments in the Episcopal Church with respect to a change in their Canon on marriage represent a fundamental departure from the faith and teaching held by the majority of our Provinces on the doctrine of marriage. Possible developments in other Provinces could further exacerbate this situation.
3. All of us acknowledge that these developments have caused further deep pain throughout our Communion.
4. The traditional doctrine of the church in view of the teaching of Scripture, upholds marriage as between a man and a woman in faithful, lifelong union. The majority of those gathered reaffirm this teaching.
5. In keeping with the consistent position of previous Primates' meetings such unilateral actions on a matter of doctrine without Catholic unity is considered by many of us as a departure from the mutual accountability and interdependence implied through being in relationship with each other in the Anglican Communion.
6. Such actions further impair our communion and create a deeper mistrust between us. This results in significant distance between us and places huge strains on the functioning of the Instruments of Communion and the ways in which we express our historic and ongoing relationships.
7. It is our unanimous desire to walk together. However given the seriousness of these matters we formally acknowledge this distance by requiring that for a period of three years TEC no longer represent us on ecumenical and interfaith bodies, should not be appointed or elected to an internal standing committee and that while participating in the internal bodies of the Anglican Communion, they will not take part in decision making on any issues pertaining to doctrine or polity.
8. We have asked the ABC to appoint a Task Group to maintain conversation among ourselves with the intention of restoration of relationship, the rebuilding of mutual trust,

healing the legacy of hurt, recognising the extent of our commonality and exploring our deep differences, ensuring they are held between us in the love and grace of Christ.

Addendum B

We, as Anglican Primates, affirm together that the Church of Jesus Christ lives to bear witness to the transforming love of God in the power of the Spirit throughout the world.

It is clear God's world has never been in greater need of this resurrection love and we long to make it known.

We commit ourselves through evangelism to proclaim the person and work of Jesus Christ, unceasingly and authentically, inviting all to embrace the beauty and joy of the Gospel.

We rely entirely on the power of the Holy Spirit who gives us speech, brings new birth, leads us into the truth revealed in Christ Jesus thus building the church.

All disciples of Jesus Christ, by virtue of our baptism, are witnesses to and of Jesus in faith, hope and love.

We pledge ourselves together to pray, listen, love, suffer and sacrifice that the world may know that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Come Holy Spirit.