



**AFFIRM**

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Home > Submission to the Working Group Appointed by the Primates

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## **Submission to the Working Group Appointed by the Primates <sup>[1]</sup>**

AFFIRM recognizes that there is a strong desire for change to allow people in life long committed Gay relationships to be ordained. While we cannot agree with this we would encourage those who seek this change to set up their own structure including being able to retain their buildings. Our concern is not to block the revisionist approach. Justice demands that no one be forced to act against their conscience. This cuts both ways. Hence our desire to see that those who seek change are given the freedom to do so without forcing others to comply.

AFFIRM held a number of meetings about possible structures culminating in a meeting in Christchurch where all of the comments and findings were presented and then preferences agreed upon. The clear preferences for all the meetings is that we would stay as we are and not go ahead with the recommendations of the "A Way Forward" report. If however this does not happen the following are our offers to the new Commission.

The AFFIRM meeting in Christchurch was impressed with the FCA submission and wanted to have it alongside the others so we have included it. They have it on their own website as well.

The three AFFIRM submissions forwarded to the Working Group appointed by the Primates are:

- A) Extra Provincial Diocese. (This is the FCA Submission).
- B) An Anglican Order of Aotearoa NZ and Polynesia.
- C) An Eighth Non Geographical Diocese in Tikanga Pakeha.

To read the submissions in full, click on 'read more'...

### **SUBMISSION TO THE WORKING GROUP APPOINTED BY THE PRIMATES**

Established by General Synod/Te Hinota Whānui 2016 to consider possible structural arrangements within our Three-Tikanga Church

to safeguard both theological convictions concerning the blessing of same gender relationships.

## Possible Structural Arrangements for the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia:

### **Introduction**

1. This submission is the result of discussions and meetings held throughout the country, initiated by the staff of Anglicans for Faith, Intercession, Renewal and Mission (AFFIRM), culminating in a meeting in Christchurch on 4 August 2016.

2. Because of time constraints this submission has not been approved by a formal meeting of the AFFIRM Council. But it does faithfully represent the opinions finally emerging from the nationwide series of meetings of Anglicans, many connected to AFFIRM, that AFFIRM has organised, and these opinions are consistent with its Mission Statement expressed in its Constitution, namely, to call the Church to biblical faith, the life of prayer, spiritual renewal and effective mission;

3. AFFIRM is an independent organisation within the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia. Its membership is composed of Affiliates, Local AFFIRM Groups and Associates (either individuals or Ministry Units).

4. AFFIRM's current Affiliate Members are:

Bishopdale Theological College

Church Army New Zealand

Sharing of Ministries Abroad (SOMA), New Zealand

The Latimer Fellowship

The New Zealand Church Missionary Society

AFFIRM has 3 Local AFFIRM Groups in Auckland, Waikato/Waiapu and Dunedin. In addition, AFFIRM has 26 Ministry Units and 9 individuals who are Associate Members.

### **Description of a ?Theological Conviction?**

5. We believe that, in order to provide for adequate protection for each theological conviction, there needs to be a clear description of the convictions. Therefore we offer

the following as a description of the theological conviction held by those who oppose the blessing of same-sex civil marriages and the ordination of those in same-sex sexual relationships.

5.1. The Church's doctrine of marriage states that:

? According to Scripture, marriage is between a man and a woman;

? Only sexual relationships within the context of such a marriage are rightly ordered.

? Any couple who are in a sexual relationship otherwise than what Scripture allows are not joined together by God;

5.2. Hence the blessing of a couple on God's behalf who are in sexual relationship not allowed by Scripture, whether or not they are regarded as married by the state, is an act of disobedience towards God.

5.3. By continuing ?in such a sexually intimate relationship a person ?will not inherit the Kingdom of God? (1 Corinthians 6:9), and hence, being a matter of obedience to the consistent view of Scripture, such conduct is not ?adiaphora? and is consequently therefore a ?first order? issue.

5.4. This has been the doctrinal position of the catholic church through its existence, and, as such, is part of ?the doctrines of the faith as this church has received them.? (A New Zealand Prayer Book / He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa, The Ordination of Priests, p905, and The Ordination of Bishops, p917)

5.5. Bishops of this church are required to maintain this doctrine as part of their commitment to Christ in his Church as they have declared in their ordination.

5.6. Furthermore, the declaration of allegiance to the doctrine of the church required in our canons requires all who affirm such allegiance, to hold to the above understanding of the doctrine of marriage.

5.7. It would be inconsistent with this theological conviction, for those holding it, to acknowledge the authority of a bishop who were to allow the blessing of a

same-sex civil marriages or the ordination of a person in a same-sex sexual relationships.

5.8. This view is held by the majority of those who regard themselves as Evangelical, but is also held by many who would not identify with that designation.

6. We acknowledge that people hold either theological conviction with integrity.

7. Should the Church continue along the path that it is travelling, we believe that those who advocate for the blessing and ordination of those in same-sex relationships will not be satisfied with provisions of 'A Way Forward.' This will not be the end of debate. There will be a further requirement that they be allowed to conduct marriage services for such couples.

## **Requirements**

8. In order for each theological conviction to be adequately protected, the following three requirements need to be met.

8.1. In any proposed restructuring, resources such as property and finances remain with those of that conviction. For example, where a Parish holds to one of the two convictions, in the event of a Parish 'splitting' from a Diocese holding a theological conviction different from that of the Parish, the property and finances of the Parish remain under the control of the Parish. Furthermore, the Parish would not be required to provide a levy to that Diocese.

8.2. Appointments to such a Parish would be made by those holding the same conviction as the Parish, and licensed to a Bishop of that conviction.

8.3. Candidates for ordination would be able to apply to a Bishop holding that theological conviction, and would be ordained by such a Bishop.

8.4. In the case of those who object to the blessing or ordination of those in a same-sex sexual relationship, they would be legally protected from civil action or prosecution should they refuse to be involved in the blessing, ordination, or the process of ordination of a person in a same-sex sexual relationship. They must,

of course, be exempt from any disciplinary action by the Church, or an individual bishop, or other member of the Church

## **Possible Structures**

### **A. An Extra-Provincial Diocese**

9.1. At the meeting organised by AFFIRM to produce this submission, it was noted that there was a further proposal to be presented by the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans to the Archbishops? Working Group. This proposal was widely supported by those at the meeting.

9.2. The proposal is that an extra-provincial diocese be set up, which could align either with the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans or with The Episcopal Church USA (TEC), depending on which theological conviction remains part of the ACANZP and which leaves.

9.3. The meeting expressed its strong preference for this proposal, particularly if those wanting a change to the doctrine of marriage formed the basis of the extra-provincial diocese. It was recognised that this would enable them to conduct same-sex marriages. This also has the advantage that both integrities described by Motion 30 GS2014 would remain in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury through the ACANZP and through TEC respectively.

9.4. For the details of this proposal, we refer the Working Group to the submission made by the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans New Zealand.

### **B. An Anglican Order of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia**

10.1. This proposal is based on how Religious Orders in the Roman Catholic Church operate and how Co-operating Parishes operate, modified to suit the current circumstances.

10.2. The proposal is that an Order be established which shares the same Doctrine and Constitution (apart from the provision of a General Synod) as the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia (ACANZP). This Order would

not come under the General Synod / Te H?nota Wh?nui (GS/THW), but would establish a Convocation that would meet annually or biennially.

10.3. The Order will have the same Formularies as are current in the ACANZP. Should the Formularies be altered by the ACANZP, the Order may decide whether or not to adopt the subsequent changes.

10.4. The Order would develop its own national structure, using the appropriate terminology (for example, Chapters or Regions).

10.5. Individuals, Parishes and Diocese may choose to join the Order. In the event of a Parish or Diocese joining the Order, the Parish or Diocese will retain the use of its property. For such Parishes and Diocese, ordinations and appointments to licensed ministry shall be made by the Order in a manner determined by the Order consistent with Anglican polity.

10.6. Parishes may choose to belong to both the Order and the ACANZP. In which case, the Parish will operate as similarly as appropriate to that of a Co-operating Parish.

10.7. The Order will provide episcopal oversight in a manner to be determined. For those exercising significant ministry within the Order there will be the requirement of being licensed by, and submitting to the authority of, an appropriate Bishop within the Order.

10.8. The members of the Order would be able to submit to the current Doctrine and the fundamental clauses of the Constitution of the ACANZP, and would not have a crisis of conscience through submitting to a governing body that they believe to be acting contrary to its own rules and Constitution.

10.9. The following chart shows the structure of the proposed Order.

### **C. An Eighth Non-Geographical Diocese in Tikanga Pakeha**

#### **11.1. Short Proposal**

That:

- 11.1.1. an eighth non-geographical Tikanga Pakeha diocese be created,
- 11.1.2. the Declaration of Submission to General Synod for licenses be revised to become a Declaration of Submission to each Diocesan Synod.
- 11.1.3. the General Synod facilitate the movement of all parish resources from existing Diocesan Trust Boards to the trust board of the new Diocese.

## **11.2. Background**

### **11.2.1. The Fundamental Provision**

The fundamental provision for this proposal remains the fulfillment of Motion 30 GS2014 which;

11.2.1.1.1. recognised that the two integrities are irreconcilable, and therefore,

11.2.1.1.2. commits to the establishment of a structure and process whereby each will continue to have integrity within the Church.

### **11.2.2. Fundamental Requirements**

To fulfill Motion 30 each Integrity requires:

#### **Identity**

#### **Integrity**

#### **Resources**

#### **Identity**

Motion 30 GS2014 has correctly identified that there are two deeply held belief systems represented within the ACANZP, and the irreconcilable nature of these beliefs. To preserve Integrity there needs to be a sufficiently clear Identity. This could be resolved either way. Given the small number of 'Liberal' churches that might choose to leave ACANZP one option is to invite a New Zealand Bishop to convene a branch of The Episcopal Church (TEC) in New Zealand. Parishes who chose to join

could leave ACANZP, with their property and form a new branch of TEC. That would create a clear differentiation of Identity, with ?Anglican? referring to those holding orthodox theology and practice internationally and ?Episcopalian? becoming the normal name for ?Liberal? Anglicans, internationally. Failing that eventuality, sufficient identity for orthodox Anglicans would need to be provided. An eighth non-geographical diocese with a suitable name would be the minimum requirement to provide such Identity for any solution that involves both parties remaining within ACANZP.

### **Integrity**

Those holding licenses need to be able to sign with integrity any declarations of submission without that being an affront to their beliefs. If (a) General Synod permits dioceses to hold different practices around the blessing of same sex relationships and the ordination of those in a same-sex marriage; and (b), the Declaration of Submission to General Synod is changed to a Declaration of Submission to the local Diocesan Synod in all things lawful and honest, then most of those licensed will be able to submit in good conscience.

### **Resources**

This is entirely practical. To fulfill the mission and ministry of the Church parishes need Resources to fulfill their mission. While transfer of property outside the Province is more problematic, we have long-standing experience of transferring property between diocese and between Tikanga. Because individual parish properties are held by Diocesan Trust Boards who will be free to make their own decisions in consultation with their own Diocesan Synods, General Synod would need to give a clear advisory to Diocesan Trust Boards and Synods to facilitate the movement



of parishes and property to the new diocese. (A time limit, and the percentage of approval required at any parish's Special Parishioner Meeting, could be specified. For example, a limit of 5-7 years after a GS motion is passed, with a two thirds approval at a Special Parishioner Meeting).

### **Tikanga**

This solution respects the position that Tikanga Maori and Tikanga Polynesia have already taken.

### **11.3. Conclusion**

An eighth non-geographical Tikanga Pakeha diocese is a structure that:

11.3.1. meets the needs for Identity, Integrity and Resources for orthodox Anglicans,

11.3.2. we are familiar with, and which could be implemented with existing processes,

11.3.3. respects Motion 30 GS2014 and Motion 29 GS2016's aspiration for a solution within ACANZP, and Tikanga Maori and Tikanga Pasifika's position,

11.3.4. preserves long-term relationships for Anglicans in New Zealand.

### **12. Commentary**

12.1. The proposal for General Synod to set up an Extra-provincial Diocese was the preference of the meeting and would satisfy the need for Identity, Integrity and Resources. It could be considered both a fulfillment of Motion 30 GS2014 and Motion 29 GS2016 if ACANZP is actively involved in creating that solution. This would more clearly create differentiation and allow ACANZP to continue in the way the majority wishes to go.

12.2. There is an incentive for ACANZP to find a substantial solution. The numbers are interesting. The Church Life Survey of some years ago, in a question asking

people's theological preferences, revealed that 7% of church members self identified as 'Liberal', and 43% Evangelical or Charismatic.

12.3. A survey held in Waiapu Diocese (after the 4 year long pro-liberalisation education programme) showed the following in an anonymous survey of 400 parishioners across multiple Parishes:

'Q. 6 a) People of gay or lesbian orientation are eligible to be ordained in the Church

Agree 156 [39%] Disagree 244 [61%]'

So even in a so-called Liberal Diocese, the beliefs on the ground appear to be quite conservative.

12.4. These statistics account, in part, for the Church's current dilemma. Those in favour of liberalisation have the numbers to get a 50% majority at most Synods, but they may well not have the votes (or parishioner acceptance) to gain the numbers needed to proceed at General Synod.

12.5. Therein lies the incentive to recognise the reality that Motion 30 GS2014 got it right by proposing alternative structures for each integrity. ACANZP has the opportunity to be prophetic for the Anglican world internationally.

## Reftagger

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