Anglican Church of Australia

Primate: The Most Reverend Dr Philip L Freier

19 September 2017

The Rev. Canon Jordan Hylden
Task Force on the Study of Marriage
78th Convention of The Episcopal Church (USA)
Email: jlhylden@gmail.com

Dear Canon Hylden

Request from the Task Force on the Study of Marriage, Episcopal Church (USA)

Thank you for your invitation to respond to the question:
"From your perspective and specific setting, what has been the impact of the Episcopal Church's authorization and use of liturgical rites for same-sex marriage and the blessing of same-sex unions on "the Church"?"

Changing the doctrine of marriage is a serious matter and it would be good to hold off on any action to alter the Church's doctrine.

It would be good to hear from The Episcopal Church (USA) of the responses to the pastoral and liturgical arrangements that have already been put in place to respond to same-sex relationships.

There is little question that changing the doctrine of marriage is a matter of grave consequence, indeed a church dividing matter.

The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia has never moved a motion with respect to pastoral and liturgical responses to this issue of marriage. General Synod has, however, made a strong reaction to changing the doctrine of marriage at its meeting that just concluded last week.

Coincidental to your request, the General Synod passed the following motion expressing its regret at changes to the doctrine of marriage by the Scottish Episcopal Church. Please see the motion of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia:

Resolution of the Seventeenth Session of the General Synod, Maroochydore, Queensland: 3 – 8 September 2017

Scottish Episcopal Church
General Synod –

a) notes with regret that the Scottish Episcopal Church has amended their Canon on Marriage to change the definition that marriage is between a man and a woman by adding a new section that allows clergy to solemnise marriage between same-sex couples as well as couples of the opposite sex;

b) notes with regret that this step is contrary to the doctrine of our Church and the teaching of Christ that, in marriage, "a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (Matt 19:6), and

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c) expresses our support for those Anglicans who have left or will need to leave the Scottish Episcopal Church because of its redefinition of marriage and those who struggle and remain; and

d) prays that the Scottish Episcopal Church will return to the doctrine of Christ in this matter and that impaired relationships will be restored.

The gravity with which the Anglican Church of Australia views changing the doctrine of the Church regarding the definition of marriage is made abundantly clear in this motion.

The proper response to changing community standards in particular contexts concerning marriage is, on this view, wrongly handled at a doctrinal level if it involves a redefinition of the doctrine of marriage but rightly developed with pastoral and liturgical resources.

I trust this assists your work and I look forward to hearing of responses to the pastoral and liturgical arrangements that have been put in place by The Episcopal Church (USA).

Grace and peace in Christ Jesus

Yours sincerely

The Most Reverend Dr Philip L. Freier
Archbishop of Melbourne and Primate Anglican Church of Australia

Province de L'Eglise Anglicane Du Congo

On behalf of His Grace MASIMANGO KATANDA Zacharie, we thank you so much for the mail talking about the recent changes in the Episcopal Church's practice of marriage especially the authorizing resolution talking of the impact of same-sex marriage and rites of blessing on your Church.

In the Province of the Anglican Church of Congo, the only type of marriage that we celebrate is for heterosexual couples. Same-sex marriage is not recognized in Article 40 of the Congolese Constitution: ' All individuals have the right to marry a person of their choice of the opposite sex and to create a family.' Thus there is no way we can introduce a proposal of the liturgical rite for the marriage of same-sex couples.

Another important point we need to mention is that our churches in Africa are still faithful to the Christian and Biblical worldview, whereas for Westerners, Secularism has become a predominant life. So, in the Province of the Anglican Church of Congo we do not have room to talk and discuss about blessing of same-sex unions. Otherwise, it will bring conflicts and division among Christians. The Church has been built for Unity and not for Division.

Once again thank you so much.
For the Most Rev MASIMANGO K. Zacharie
The Venerable KIBWELA K. Anthonio

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL

The Rev'd Canon Jordan Hylden, on behalf of:
Task Force on the Study of Marriage
78th Convention of The Episcopal Church (USA)
Sent by email to: jlhylden@gmail.com

William Nye
Secretary General

18th October 2017

Dear Canon Hylden,

Response to the consultation on TEC's new liturgical rites for same sex marriage and the blessing of same sex unions

from: The Secretary General to the Archbishops' Council of the Church of England.

Thank you for your message of 8th September inviting me to respond on behalf of the Church of England to TEC's authorization of trial marriage rites, and to comment on the impact of this on relations between our churches.

I am afraid that the time scale offered for this consultation – five working weeks – is rather short for a matter of this weight. This has precluded the possibility of debating the question in any of our formal deliberative structures. This response, therefore, reflects discussions among staff of the Church's Archbishops' Council only.

In your message, you ask us to consider one question: **From our perspective and specific setting, what has been the impact of the Episcopal Church's authorization and use of liturgical rites for same-sex marriage and the blessing of same-sex unions on "The Church."**

However, your message makes clear that, apart from the rites themselves, some aspects of TEC's practice concerning these rites are, as yet, undecided. Specifically, you note that these rites are not presently part of TEC's *Book of Common Prayer*, that they might become so, or alternatively that they could retain "trial use" status indefinitely, or be given some other status without being incorporated into your *Book of Common Prayer*. Whilst I have made some overall observations in response to your specific question, the way in which TEC resolves these questions of implementation will have implications in terms of our relationship as churches.

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In order to give a full response to your question, it may be helpful if I first outline some key points about the Church of England's position regarding civil same-sex marriage which, as you know, is now legal in England.

1. The Church of England and same-sex marriage.

You will not need reminding of the division of opinion concerning same-sex relationships within the Anglican Communion or that these divisions are mirrored in the life of the Church of England. For a majority in the Communion, and in the Church of England (not to mention the Church Catholic), Holy Scripture is held to rule that sexual activity outside marriage between a man and a woman is contrary to God's will. Although that is not the universal view in the Church of England, we were nevertheless broadly able to accept, some dozen years ago, the Government's proposals for Civil Partnerships for same-sex couples, which conferred all the legal rights and responsibilities of marriage but did not treat sexual activity as intrinsic to the relationship. When a later Government introduced the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill, opposition within the Church of England extended well beyond those who regarded all same-sex sexual activity as sinful because it was clear that the Bill meant that the understanding of marriage would have to change for everyone. In short, the Government was not expanding an existing institution but changing the legal definition, indeed the nature, of marriage for all. It is important to understand that the Church of England's opposition to same-sex marriage in this country was based on arguments that did not foreclose the debate within our Church, or within the Communion, on the morality of same-sex relationships. Our arguments turned on the social (and, for Christians, the doctrinal) meaning of marriage.

Further recent expression of the Church of England's understanding of marriage can be found in *Men and Women in Marriage: A document from the Faith and Order Commission published with the agreement of the House of Bishops of the Church of England and approved for study* (see: https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1715479/marriagetextbrochureprint.pdf). In their foreword to the document, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York say, 'It sets out to explain the continued importance of and rationale for the doctrine of the Church of England as set out in *The Book of Common Prayer*, Canon B30, the *Common Worship Marriage Service* and the teaching document issued by the House in September 1999.'

Because of the position of the Church of England within the law of this land, specific provision had to be made in the Bill for the marriage rite of the Church of England to remain unaltered (unless by a decision of the Church's own councils). You will be aware that in England – unlike in other Anglican provinces – the Church of England is bound by law to marry anyone eligible who lives in England and who seeks a church wedding, regardless of 'membership' of the Church. Consequently, in English law as it currently has developed, there are two understandings of marriage operating side by side – marriage according to the rites of the Church of England, in which the heterosexual and therefore procreative meaning of marriage is explicit, and marriage according to the State's practices which is gender-neutral and not understood to be even partially defined by openness to the procreation of children. It is our position that this second understanding of marriage breaks with the inherited meaning of marriage across many cultures and over many

centuries – indeed, for as long as marriage has existed – and is very hard to reconcile with the Christian churches' traditional teaching on marriage. Indeed, the notion of difference between the marriage partners is enshrined within this doctrine which has historically understood human marriage to be a metaphor for the relationship of love between Christ and the Church.

Changing doctrine is, we believe, a matter that must be undertaken in a highly consultative and ecumenical manner across the major Christian churches of the world as well as among Anglicans globally. I discuss this further below. Moreover, the way that TEC handles the accommodation of differing doctrinal views will be significant for our future relationships.

This sketch of the Church of England's current position regarding same-sex marriage is important because it explains one area of our concern about the new TEC rites – viz. the removal of reference to the procreation of children as one of the three purposes for which marriage was ordained by God, as set out in the *Book of Common Prayer (1662)* which is a crucial source, for us, in determining how the scriptural references to marriage are to be interpreted.

2. The Church of England, TEC, and the Anglican Communion

I do not need to rehearse the history within the Anglican Communion of issues concerning human sexuality, or the reactions to TEC's decision to alter its understanding of marriage, and the consequences which flowed from this decision. You will also be aware that some voices within the Communion believe that the consequences which the Primates agreed should be imposed on a Province which acted unilaterally over these issues (or other issues of doctrine) have not been as wide-ranging as they would have wished. The strength of this perception makes it likely that the authorization of new rites by TEC may be accompanied by calls for more, and more stringent, consequences to be imposed very publicly. No doubt this eventuality has been part of your calculations in bringing forward these rites at this time.

From the point of view of the Church of England, these actions by TEC affect us at two levels. Domestically, as you may know, we have embarked upon the major task of compiling an Episcopal Teaching Document on marriage and human sexuality which will draw upon expertise across many disciplines, social, anthropological and biological, as well as theological, to express the Church's teaching clearly, demonstrate the areas where we can count on wide agreement and expose those areas where our disagreements run deepest. Our intention is to bring this toward completion in 2020. The Teaching Document can speak only for the Church of England, but the new rites put forward by TEC change the "facts on the ground", since our work must take the life of the whole Communion into account.

By promulgating the new marriage rites, TEC has taken a step which appears to conclude, at the level of an individual province acting unilaterally, a discussion that is still very much "live" in the Church of England and the wider Communion. Because much of this debate concerns the question of whether or not same-sex marriage is a first-order issue which precludes continuing together in communion within the Communion and within the

Church of England, TEC's action in promulgating the new liturgies is, at the least, unhelpful to those of us seeking to bring the Church of England's deliberations to a good outcome.

The matter affects us at a second level, in that the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury as one of the instruments of unity within the Communion, as well as the Primate of All England, puts the actions of the Church of England under particular scrutiny in a way that no other Province experiences. Our response to TEC's evolving position on these matters must, of necessity, be shaped partly by that international role which is symbolic as much as structural. We accept that TEC has taken the decision to move towards the recognition and institution of same-sex marriages. The divisive implications of this for the Anglican Communion are well known. But the manner in which same-sex marriage is incorporated into TEC's pastoral practice will also have an impact on our relationships.

3. Marriage Rites and Pastoral Practice

Despite the careful wording of the preface to the *Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage 2*, in which the "gift of children" is cited as one of God's purposes for the union of two people "when it is God's will", it remains that the purposes of marriage as understood through the ages have been substantially altered in this new rite. The phrase "the gift of children" is (presumably deliberately) ambiguous. It embraces, for example, adoption. Adoption is one thing (and we celebrate all adoptions that are in the child's best interests) but procreation is another. In the new rite, the procreative function of sexual intercourse, and the role of procreation as a central purpose of marriage, has been erased. I am, of course, fully aware of the arguments, from the compilation of Cranmer's First Prayer Book onwards, about the order of priority given to the three purposes for which marriage has always, in our rites, been ordained. There are arguments for elevating procreation above the mutual support and comfort that the one has of the other, and vice versa. But the ordering is a secondary matter. The best one can say about effectively erasing one of the key traditional purposes of marriage is that it is a very big step to have taken unilaterally in the face of global understandings of our shared traditions across the Church of God.

I emphasise this point because of concerns about how this new preface will be handled in practice. Relations between churches are affected, not only by formal resolutions but by what happens on the ground. Will the celebrant solemnly repeat the wording of the preface, praying for "— when it is God's will, the gift of children", for same-sex and opposite-sex couples alike, knowing that significantly different understandings of how that gift can be realised are in play? Will there be official, or tacit, agreement to dispense with those lines when a couple is uninterested in God's gift of children, thus colluding with the consumerist assumption that children are a choice not a gift? In our view, the removal of procreation as a primary purpose of marriage renders the reference to the gift of children vulnerable to further reduction of significance within the rite. It would be good to be assured that it will remain integral in all cases, although we do not believe that this will be sufficient to stave off further impairment of relationships within the Communion in the light of the new rite.

One key question about the implementation of the rite concerns the line in your accompanying message about its future incorporation, or otherwise, within your *Book of*

Common Prayer. If the impairment of relationships within the Communion is to be minimised, we believe that the principle of enshrining diversity of doctrinal views within TEC's practices is important. Once a controversial decision has been made, it is important to work on questions of how the decision, and the new practices which may follow from it, are **received** across the Church. As the Church of England has found on other matters, when a decision has been made by a majority in ways which change the church's expression of its doctrinal inheritance, the quality of provision made for those who dissent from the majority view can mean the difference between bitter splits and continuing to walk together as one church which is large enough to honour difference. The impact of division on mission is very grievous. Especially at a time when our respective societies are divided, it seems to be especially important that the Church can model 'good disagreement', the capacity to journey together without exclusion or expulsion, whether of those who wish to change or those who do not. This was something expressed clearly by the Archbishop of Canterbury at the recent Primates' meeting in defence of those Provinces (including TEC) which are considering or who have changed their approach to marriage.

You doubtless know of the Church of England's "Five Guiding Principles" for promoting mutual respect and flourishing between the majority who accept the full ministry, including episcopal ministry, of women, and the smaller number who, in conscience cannot make this step. (see: http://cofecomms.tumblr.com/post/157822785237/5-guiding-principles-on-women-and-the-episcopate) We are, as a church, learning painfully to walk together under the guidance of these principles and we believe that they represent something authentically Anglican about respect for difference and the implications of doctrinal change. Whether similar principles could promote mutual respect and belonging among Anglicans whose doctrinal views on marriage and same-sex relationships are at odds is an interesting, and so far untested, question. Much depends, of course, on where the churches determine these matters to be found in the hierarchy of truths and, thus, their implications for Christian Unity. (In this regard, an important resource for the Church of England is a further report by its Faith and Order Commission: *Communion and Disagreement*
https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2530546/communion_and_disagreement_faoc_report_gs_misc_1139.pdf) You will be aware that there are many in the Church of England, as in the Anglican Communion as a whole, who do not consider views on marriage and same-sex relationships to be adiaphora, or a thing indifferent.

As I understand the relevant paragraph of your message, there seem to be four possible scenarios for the status TEC gives to the new marriage rites. Forgive me if I have misunderstood, but they appear to be:

a) Incorporate the new rite within the Book of Common Prayer as the only marriage rite therein;
b) Incorporate the new rite, alongside the existing rite, as alternatives;
c) Retain the new rites for "Trial Use" indefinitely;
d) Some other status, unspecified.

The difficulty with a) would be that members of the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion would infer that traditionalists within TEC, whether couples or officiating clergy, would be required to use a rite that did not reflect their doctrinal view. By extension, it would be assumed that Christians with a traditional understanding of marriage (probably a large majority of Anglicans worldwide) were being deliberately marginalised within TEC and that their beliefs, and perhaps they themselves, were unwelcome in your province. Within the Church of England, those who hold that traditional understanding would feel their fears about the future trajectory of Anglican doctrine to be reinforced and the pressure to dissociate the Church of England from TEC, in all manner of ways, would increase, to the distress of many members of the Church of England. This would be potentially damaging to our current processes leading toward the Episcopal Teaching Document, since some of those holding the Church's traditional teaching would infer that TEC's actions were the start of a process intended eventually to leave them no room to remain authentically part of global Anglicanism. I must emphasise how sadly a distancing of our relationships would be experienced, given our shared history and our common interests and working in so many areas.

I am not competent to comment on the impact of option a) on those members of TEC who are not in favour of introducing rites for same-sex marriage but who remain committed to the unity of the Anglican Communion. However, in terms of Communion relationships and the Church of England's place within the Communion, it would be highly regrettable if members of TEC who fall into that category were driven to conclude that their position was untenable, since this would be interpreted as a sign that TEC was promoting an absolutist position in which loyalty to the Anglican Communion was not respected. That would again be a very sad development. As I have implied it would make the process of our own discussions, in the Church of England, on sexuality issues that much harder to resolve.

I am not quite clear from your message whether option b), above, is actually being contemplated. I believe it is worth considering as a step that might ameliorate the potential fractures between TEC, the Church of England, and the Communion. It would place "traditionalists" and "revisionists" (I am aware of the limitations of those terms, but the broad categories are still salient) on the same footing, enabling both groups to use marriage rites which reflected their understanding of the institution of marriage. Whilst option b) would not satisfy those for whom the concept of same-sex marriage is undoctrinal (and they are a substantial group), it would be an important earnest of intention that TEC still understands those with traditional views of marriage, across the Communion, to be authentic Anglicans. That statement, that traditionalists both in and beyond TEC, are authentic Anglicans (most of them would argue that since they have not changed their views they are the more authentic) is, I suggest, essential in terms of ecumenism and intra Anglican relations. One of the fears of many Provinces, as the Archbishop of Canterbury has communicated them to me, is that TEC, for whom they have much affection, want not only to change their own understanding but seek to impose the change on the rest of the Communion.

Option c) – to retain Trial Status indefinitely – may be thought to stretch the meaning of the word "trial" unduly! However, it has the pragmatic advantage of according the new rite a degree of provisionality that might be seen to demonstrate TEC's willingness to avoid irrevocably redefining marriage, and to leave room for TEC to be part of a consensus which might emerge one way or the other within the Communion. This would help address questions of reception, not only in TEC but across the Communion. As history of the debates on contraception, divorce and also on the ordination of women have shown, the theological process of reception beyond one's own Province is of very great importance and has been central to changes made over the last 100 years. Although the authorisation of any rite for same-sex marriage will be construed by some traditionalists in the Church of England and the Communion as completely unacceptable and as a first-order issue on which there can be no compromise, retaining the trial status of the rites might be the least damaging to wider Anglican relationships, given that TEC is already committed to incorporating same-sex marriage liturgies in some way.

I should also comment that the aspect of interfaith relations should be considered. For TEC to take this step without provision for minority traditionalists would make ecumenical relations more difficult and would be a serious blow for interfaith relations, negatively impacting Christians around the world especially in areas where they are persecuted minorities, as well as harming the stringent efforts to reinforce moderation in religious expression in countries like ours which are afflicted by terrorism.

Respecting the TEC's own decision-making processes which have led to its authorisation of the proposed trial marriage rites, I have sought to offer some reflections on ways that *might* reduce the impact on Inter-Anglican relations of that decision. However, I cannot conclude without emphasising that the principle of *lex orandi: lex credendi*, has long been a unifying factor in understanding how Anglicans approach doctrine. Anglican doctrine is not distinct from our formal and authorised liturgies. By changing the ways that the divinely ordained purposes of marriage are expressed liturgically, the new TEC marriage rites constitute a clear divergence from the understanding of marriage held throughout the history of the Christian church itself and by the great majority of Anglicans, and other Christians, today.

It is a source of great regret – shared by many in the Church of England, including many who are deeply sympathetic to LGBTI+ people, that this step has been taken by TEC without a much wider consensus across the Communion and among our ecumenical partners. Whatever the formal consequences which may follow for TEC in relation to the Communion, the introduction of the new liturgies cannot but hinder, in numerous small ways, the good relationships and close cooperation between our two Provinces for which we in the Church of England pray daily. We will watch with considerable interest and some concern to see how the new rites are introduced into the pastoral life of TEC.

I hope that my comments above are not only helpful but serve to assure you, notwithstanding the impairments in our communion, of our continuing desire to walk as closely together as is possible, in shared fellowship and love for our Lord Jesus Christ.

Yours sincerely,

William Nye

William Nye LVO
Secretary General, Archbishops' Council

RESPONSE TO THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH ON RITES FOR SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

At the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church 2017, the second reading of an amendment to Canon 31 (Of the Solemnisation of Holy Matrimony) was passed. The amendment, by removing section 1 of the canon, also took away the only doctrinal definition of marriage to be found in the SEC's Code of Canons. Marriage from now on is to be conducted in accordance with Scots Law (and so the marriage of persons of the same sex is implicitly now allowed in churches), and the only explicit reference to the possibility of marriage between persons of the same sex in church is in the clause about nomination to the Registrar General for Scotland for this purpose. Otherwise, the doctrine of the SEC concerning marriage is to be looked for in its liturgical books. A new conscience clause makes explicit a situation which already pertains, that no cleric shall be required to conduct any marriage against their conscience. The prefaratory words of this clause, 'In the light of the differing understandings of the nature of marriage in this Church', could refer as much to the nature of marriage, or its purpose, as to whether it can be between persons of the same sex. The point to be noted is that, by contrast with The Episcopal Church, no new definition of marriage has been made explicit in the Code of Canons. In this respect, the SEC has rejected the approach of TEC.

A further difference between the Scottish situation and the American is that the Scottish Book of Common Prayer (1929) does not set the baseline of doctrine. The Prayer Book is only one among many books which have full canonical authorisation and status under Canon 22 (Of Divine Worship and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church). This means that the *Marriage Liturgy 2007* holds equal doctrinal weight with the Solemnization of Holy Matrimony in the Prayer Book.

When the Marriage Liturgy was revised in 2007 the Liturgy Committee was working in response to widely held understandings of marriage which seek to remove what might be perceived as sexual hierarchy and gender roles in traditional Christian marriage between one man and one woman. The result is a liturgy which allows for several paths through the service. One of these paths is gender-neutral in its terminology, so that there is no husband and wife, only named persons taking each other in marriage, and the man does not necessarily make his vows before the woman does. The College of Bishops, in introducing this liturgy to the General Synod, made assurances that the gender-neutral language of the rite was not a gateway to marriage between persons of the same sex, rather it was to be seen as a way of allowing men and women to express their relationship in marriage in ways

which emphasised their roles as equal partners in a lifelong union in the sight of God and the Church.

The consequence of this liturgy was nevertheless that when the process of canonical change was being undergone, an argument could be made that there would be no need for liturgical change in order to accommodate the marriage of persons of the same sex. And this indeed has been the case. After the amendment to Canon 31 passed, the Liturgy Committee issued guidance which simply stated that for the solemnisation of marriages between persons of the same sex, the rite to be used is *Marriage Liturgy 2007*, and that care should be taken to chose readings from the authorised scriptural pericopes which are appropriate to the circumstances. At this point, there has been no move from the Faith and Order Board to request revision of the *Marriage Liturgy 2007* or to produce a new rite. By contrast with The Episcopal Church, we find ourselves in the arguably advantageous position of having a rite which can be used alike for couples of the same sex or of different sexes. There have so far, in the few weeks since the canonical amendment came into force, been several marriages between persons of the same sex using *Marriage Liturgy 2007*. On the basis of anecdote alone, the impression has been that the liturgical act being celebrated is simply the normal rite familiar to everyone in the Scottish Episcopal Church – nothing out of the ordinary. This helps to reinforce an understanding that Christian marriage is marriage without regard to the sex of the couple – there is no different category of ‘same-sex’ marriage.

In responding to The Episcopal Church’s request to comment on the authorisation and use of liturgical rites for same-sex marriage and the blessing of same-sex unions in the Church, we would emphasise this last point, that a single marriage liturgy should be available to all. We should also comment that events in TEC have had little influence in the process of canonical change in Scotland, and that we have looked rather to our foundations.

Dr John Reuben Davies
Convener, The Liturgy Committee
The Scottish Episcopal Church

Episcopal Church of Sudan

Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Saviour.

I want to thank you for sending us the Study on Marriage as it has been authorized by The Episcopal Church's General Convention. Episcopal Church of Sudan does not approve of same-sex marriage because it does not believe that it is the will of God. As such, the Episcopal Church of Sudan does not approve of trial rites for same-sex marriage as it has been authorized by The Episcopal Church of the USA. However, we are thankful to Task Force for sharing it with us.

The Most Revd. Ezekiel Kondo

Archbishop and Primate of Episcopal Church of Sudan

Anglican Church of Tanzania

From now onward be informed that we are not having any church partnership. Please do not write me back on this matter.

The Most Rev'd Jacob Erasto Chimeledya
Archbishop of Tanzania & Bishop of Mpwapwa

THE CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF WEST AFRICA

(Anglican Communion)

The Most Revd. Dr. Daniel Yinkah Sarfo
Primate & Metropolitan

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From the Office of the CPWA Primate

20th September, 2017

REV. CANON JORDAN HYLDEN
EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF DALLAS
U.S.A
jlhylden@gmail.com

Dear Sir,

RE: REQUEST FROM THE TASK FORCE ON THE STUDY OF MARRIAGE, EPISCOPAL CHURCH (USA)

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ of The Episcopal Church.

1. Your recent decisions with respect to marriage have drawn a line as a drift from the Catholic and traditional marriage between man and woman to something else which most Anglican Provinces including ours abhor. It is a complete turn from *The Book of Common Prayer which makes us Anglicans*.

2. We, in the Anglican Church of the Province of West Africa will never permit same-sex marriages to be liturgically celebrated. We believe that same-sex marriage is unbiblical, unnatural and a '*taboo*' in Africa.

3. We stand in solidarity with the Anglican Communion decision taken at the last (2016) Primates' Meeting and chastise The Episcopal Church (TEC) on the action and practice taken on marriage. The action taken on marriage is a great disservice to growth and evangelism in Africa as most of our youth are leaving our Churches to other Pentecostal Churches.

4. *From our perspective and specific setting, the impact of the Episcopal Church's authorization and use of liturgical rites for same-sex marriage and the blessing of same-sex unions on "the Church"* has had a negative impact on the Anglican Communion.

However, despite all the differences in our doctrines, the Church of the Province of West Africa has decided to walk with all who belong to the Anglican Communion.

With every blessing.

Yours faithfully In Christ,

Most Rev Prof DANIEL YINK... SARFO
Primate & Metropolitan Archbishop
(CPWA)
Archbishop of the Internal Province of
GHANA

THE MOST REV'D PROF DANIEL YINKAH SARFO *(PhD, DD, tssf)*
(THE PRIMATE OF CPWA/ ANGLICAN BISHOP OF KUMASI)

Cc: *REV'D CANON ANTHONY M. EIWULEY, PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, CPWA*