

# The Convent Station Statement on the changing ethos of the Anglican Communion

*June 13, 2010*

The Council of The Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission (APLM), meeting in New Jersey, expresses its grave concern at the distressing news of the dismissal of the Episcopal Church's members of Anglican international ecumenical dialogues on the basis of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Pentecost letter. Our alarm, however, goes much deeper than the presenting issues.

It should now be clear to all that the result of the proposed "Covenant" is not only to control those Churches that ordain openly gay and lesbian persons. Rather, the Archbishop has finally come out about the ramifications of the proposed "Covenant:" reshaping the structure of the Anglican Communion into a hierarchically-centralized Communion.

As an association historically dedicated to renewing the liturgy and mission of the Church, APLM is amazed by the Archbishop's lack of respect for the Constitution and worship of the Episcopal Church, a duly constituted member province of the Communion. Other member Churches should take note.

The Episcopal Church's Constitution and *Book of Common Prayer* (which is itself part of the Constitution) are founded upon a baptismal theology of the Church more Orthodox than Roman and certainly more Anglican than the vision of the Church which seems to guide the Archbishop. For we understand ourselves as a community of the baptized, governing ourselves by the consent of the governed not by the will of any hierarch. The punitive actions referenced are more to be expected from a Church with unitary hierarchical control, such as the Church of Rome.

Additionally we lament this disregard for the tradition of English law, penalizing persons who are not the perpetrators of the alleged offense and scapegoating the innocent. The dismissal has also betrayed our shared tradition of equal protection under the law by targeting the Episcopal Church first, without punishing simultaneously those member Churches of the Communion which have failed to engage in the promised listening process and have further fractured the Communion.

We applaud the response of the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church and join her in decrying this latest assault upon its polity and the Baptismal theology of the Book of Common Prayer.

Convent Station, New Jersey