



The Archbishops and Primates of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

13th November 2018

The Most Reverend Dr Glenn Davies
Archbishop of Sydney
Anglican Diocese of Sydney
St Andrew's House, Sydney Square
NSW, Australia
Sent via email

Kia ora Archbishop Glenn,

Response to "A proposal for the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia"

Talofa, Namaste, Malo e lelei, Bula Vinaka: We greet you in the languages of the larger people groups in our province.

Above all, we extend greetings and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Standing Committee of our General Synod Te Hīnota Whānui met in Palmerston North earlier this month and carefully considered your proposal¹, and a report from our Archbishops and others who met with you at Hemi Tapu, Kirikiriroa², on August 23, 2018.

We are indeed grateful that you chose to accept our Archbishops' invitation to come to Aotearoa New Zealand to meet face to face with people who represent the range of views in our Church on the blessing of same-sex civil marriages.

As you know, the group you met also included folk who have decided to disaffiliate from Anglican parishes following the decisions of General Synod Te Hīnota Whānui 2018.

We acknowledge the care with which you listened to those gathered.

We also recognise that your detailed proposal was pre-prepared. And that there was no opportunity, before you presented your proposal to our meeting, for you to adjust what you had pre-prepared in the light of what you heard.

However, there was time to take account of what was shared with you before the public release of your proposal for our Church. There were no substantive changes made to your document in the light of our meeting. It's our view that had we been understood, there would have been changes.

¹ "A proposal for the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia":
<https://sydneyanglicans.net/mediareleases/archbishops-proposal-for-new-zealand-anglicans>

² St James, Hamilton.



We have worked together in this Church on this question of the blessing of same-gender relationships for more than forty years.

In May this year our General Synod chose a way forward which has held a wide range of views together. In adopting that way forward, enormous care has been taken to honour and protect the integrity of people who hold irreconcilable views – while at the same time staying faithful to the foundational formularies of our Church, and not making any doctrinal change.

We are deeply saddened that some feel unable to remain in this Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

We acknowledge that others with equally strong dissenting views on this issue (from either end of the spectrum) are choosing to remain within the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

Your proposal invokes "The Solution of Distinctive Co-Existence" and suggests we recognize "an alternative expression of Anglicanism in New Zealand", and that there be "two Anglican Churches in New Zealand". Linked loosely by heritage – but not by the laws and promises and solemn commitments made by this provincial church.

With respect, Anglicans in this province have grappled – with limited success – with what "distinctive co-existence" means for more than 200 years.

We have grappled with what it means to live with people who God made differently to us.

A people who don't see things as we do, nor share our understandings or experiences or values. Sadly, a lack of compassion by the settler church led it to being complicit in the marginalising of God's people in their own country. *We have sinned in ignorance, we have sinned in weakness, we have sinned through our own deliberate fault*³.

Only in the later portion of that 200 years, after decades of struggle, have we arrived at a constitution which enshrines respectful ways of being church together.

One of the key messages we hoped you would take to your home from our meeting at Hemi Tapu is the unique consequences of our history as Anglicans in Aotearoa New Zealand.

We are a Church made up of colonised and coloniser.

We have a difficult history. It is a shared history. We know the language, the face and the consequences of colonisation. For Māori, disenfranchisement, alienation from *whenua*⁴, racism and poverty are consequences of this shared history.

Our nation is founded on *te Tiriti o Waitangi*, which our Church helped to broker. The Treaty offered, and still offers, a framework for the flourishing of all in this land. Our Church's constitution, *Te Pouhere*, provides for the potential of genuine and just partnership. This is largely unrealised.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is woven into both Treaty and Te Pouhere.

These two are not simply founding documents. They are lived realities, they are enlivened by 200 years of shared history and relationships in the Gospel.

³ P407, The New Zealand Prayer Book, *He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*.

⁴ Land.



And, they are strongly founded on the historic faith first shared by the CMS missionaries and welcomed and spread by Māori, the *tangata whenua*, the first people of our land.

As a Church we continue to be challenged by enormous internal and external inequities: we are a reflection of our society.

To be Anglican in this land requires that we, led by our Lord Jesus Christ, face into this shared history so that we can help shape a common future for all people based on peace and justice and righteousness.

We are committed to meeting the challenges of the Gospel imperatives, to working out the consequences of our shared history and to honour our relationships. Māori are a people of *whakapapa*⁵, *whenua*, and Treaty and we are staying true to those roots – they cannot be replicated elsewhere.

Our General Synod resolution on the blessing of same-sex civil marriages cannot be divorced from this shared history – it was a cross-tikanga resolution, decades in the making.

Indeed, had it not been for the extraordinary generosity and patience extended by Tikanga Māori (and Tikanga Polynesia) on this very matter, this province would be in a far less healthy state than it is today.

If those disaffiliating want to be committed to that *fundamental consequence of being Anglican* in Aotearoa New Zealand, then they must stay in these constitutional and Treaty-based relationships.

We cannot recognise a Church as Anglican which does not encapsulate this 200 years of relationship and history.

Fundamentally, with respect and gratitude, it seems to us that your proposal has used our context and our story for wider purposes and does not understand or respect our history nor the consequences and responsibilities of our foundational and ongoing relationships.

Yours in Christ,



Archbishop Donald Tamihere
Te Pihopa o Aotearoa



Archbishop Philip Richardson
Senior Bishop of the New Zealand Dioceses

on behalf of the General Synod Standing Committee of the Anglican Church
in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

⁵ Genealogy

