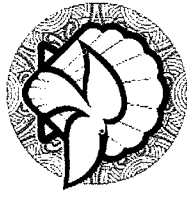


The Anglican Methodist Covenant



Landmarks on the journey

At the outset we celebrate

the many ways, both formal and informal, in which Anglicans and Methodists already share and work together, including common engagement in twenty-nine co-operative parish ventures. In particular we acknowledge:

1. Acceptance of each others church as part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. (AGS 1976/MC 1980)
2. That the ministry of each of our churches is a real ministry of Word and Sacrament. (AGS 1976/MC 1980)
3. The apostolic content in the ordained ministry of each of our churches. (AGS 1986/MC2004)
4. That each church exercises a ministry of episkope. (AGS 1986/MC2004)
5. The commitment of our churches to seek a unification of ministries. (AGS 1980/MC 1980)
6. A mutual recognition of baptism and church membership. (AGS 1980/MC 1980)
7. That baptised members of each church are free to receive the Eucharist in each other's churches. (AGS 1980/MC 2004)

We recognise that in the past there have been disappointments as well as hopes in the relationship between our two churches. However we are resolved to work at closer relations within the search for the visible unity of the church.

Our Aotearoa New Zealand context

We acknowledge each other's response to the Treaty of Waitangi – the three-*tikanga* partnership of the Anglican Church (Pakeha/Maori/Polynesian),

and the bicultural partnership of the Methodist Church (Maori/Tauīwi). Led by the Holy Spirit our two churches have each developed a model appropriate for themselves. Both churches have been significantly transformed and continue to evolve in response to Treaty of Waitangi and other contextual issues.

In this covenant we affirm:

1. That the unity of the church is not incidental to God's purpose. The unity of the church (which is the prayer of Jesus in John 17) demonstrates God's ability to reconcile through Christ and supports the mission of God. The unity of the church serves the unity of creation.
2. That visible unity of the churches involves mutual acceptance of the apostolic faith, sacramental life and ministry, and a common mission to the world.
3. Each other's understandings of the mission of the church, including: the ministry of all the baptised; proclamation of the gospel; the nurture of all members; care of those who are new to the church; social service; transformation of unjust structures; and the care of creation.
4. That each church in its own way exercises the ministry of episkope or oversight. The Anglican Church does this through the office of bishops and synodical government. The Methodist Church does so through the annual conference, the presidency between conferences, and by devolution of the conference district superintendents and connexional boards and committees.
5. That episkope is to be expressed at three levels: the personal whereby the ordained are called to service and responsibility within the church; the collegial which calls the ordained to consult with each

other and act together in the exercise of the ministry of the

oversight; the communal which recognises that all baptised members participate not only in the mission of the church, but also in the ministry of oversight.

6. That our two churches' different exercise of personal, collegial and communal oversight reflects ways in which our churches are variously nurtured in the faith, pastored, guided and disciplined.
7. The ministry of oversight in both our churches is concerned with the nurturing and maintenance of the community's fidelity to the teaching of the apostles, the preaching of the gospel, the authentic celebration of the sacraments, and the mission of the church.
8. That efforts at convergence in the practice of episkope challenge both our traditions. We note the call in the World Council of Churches Faith and Order statement 'Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry' (1982) that all churches need to examine their practice of episkope. Churches in which episkope is exercised in a presbyteral or corporate fashion need to consider the merits of a personal episcopacy. Churches which are episcopally ordered are challenged to seek the renewal of their practice of episcopal ministry, taking into account the positive contributions which can be made by systems of presbyteral and corporate oversight. A frank acceptance by all parties of the need for renewal and mutual enrichment would do much to remove negative perceptions and to advance *koinonia* and the process of convergence.
9. Our vision at this time is one of visible unity. We are not sure at this time what this would look like, or what its implications might be for our two churches. ("What we will yet be has not yet been revealed." 1 John 3:2) We see this search as a journey in keeping with the model of "Unity by Stages" already