



No Anglican Covenant Coalition
Anglicans for Comprehensive Unity
noanglican covenant.org

NEWS RELEASE
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2011
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NO ANGLICAN COVENANT COALITION CALLS FOR FAIR PROCESS AND HONEST DEBATE

LONDON —The No Anglican Covenant Coalition has criticized church officials for attempting to suppress honest discussion of the proposed Anglican Covenant.

“Instead of fostering a free and open discussion, church officials are trying to ensure that this radical document is endorsed without serious debate,” according to Coalition Moderator, Dr Lesley Fellows. “Unfortunately, this is entirely consistent with what has been happening throughout the process.”

The idea of an Anglican Covenant was first proposed officially in 2004 as a means of addressing divisions among the member churches of the Anglican Communion on matters ranging from human sexuality to the role of women. The current draft, which has been unilaterally designated as “final”, has been referred to the Communion churches for adoption. The proposed Covenant establishes mechanisms that would have the effect of forcing member churches to conform to the demands and expectations of other churches or risk exclusion from the Communion. The draft must be either accepted without amendment or rejected entirely; no other options are allowed.

A series of decisions demonstrate a pattern of bias and manipulation designed to facilitate Covenant adoption:

- November 2010 — When the Church of England debated the Anglican Covenant, official materials prepared for General Synod members made no reference to the concerns of critics or to the case against the Covenant. This was in marked contrast to what happened in 2007, when the House of Bishops agreed that an additional briefing document presenting opposing arguments should be circulated to all General Synod members in advance of the debate.
- November 2010 — When Modern Church and Inclusive Church placed advertisements critical of the proposed Covenant in the church press, and when the No Anglican Covenant Coalition was launched, Covenant sceptics were criticized by senior church officials for going public and “campaigning” instead of remaining silent.

- December 2010 — When the draft Covenant was formally referred to English dioceses, the referral document provided a random list of quotations from the last General Synod debate, with pro- and anti-Covenant remarks mixed up together, followed by a purely pro-Covenant presentation.
- January 2011 — A request by Covenant opponents to the Business Committee of General Synod to circulate material setting out the case against the Covenant was rejected.
- February 2011 — The Anglican Communion Office issued an official study guide and list of questions and answers for international use that neither provide a balanced look at the issues nor fairly represent the views of those critical of the Covenant.

“In the history of General Synod, we know of no instance where such an important matter (designated as Article 8) has been referred to diocesan synods without the case for both sides being clearly set out,” according to Jonathan Clatworthy, General Secretary of Modern Church and a member of the No Anglican Covenant Coalition. “Both sides were represented regarding the most recent plans for unity with the Methodists. That was the case at every stage of the debate over the ordination of women as priests, and now, as bishops. The material concerning the Covenant falls far short of the ideals of justice, of the Anglican tradition. Even in the House of Commons, all sides of an issue are allowed to be heard.”

The No Anglican Covenant Coalition website, noanglican covenant.org, provides a wealth of resources for those seeking to understand the proposed Anglican Covenant. Material specifically designed for use by Church of England dioceses is also available from the Modern Church Web site at modernchurch.org.uk/resources/mc/cofe.

“Diocesan synods in the Church of England deserve to hear all sides of the debate,” said Dr Fellows. “We are not afraid of an open, fair, and honest debate. If the supporters of the Covenant had a stronger case, perhaps they wouldn’t be either.”

- 30 -

noanglican covenant.org

Revd Dr Lesley Fellows (England)	+44 184 4239 268
Revd Canon Hugh Magee (Scotland)	+44 133 4470 446
Dr Lionel Deimel (USA)	+1 412 512 9087
Revd Malcolm French (Canada)	+1 306 550 2277
Revd Lawrence Kimberley (New Zealand)	+64 3 981 7384