

Statement from the Anglican Church of Burundi

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Abp Bernard Ntahoturi, Burundi

The House of Bishops of the Anglican Church of Burundi received and discussed the Archbishop of Canterbury's reflection "The Challenge and Hope of Being Anglican Today" in which he sets out his thinking concerning the future of the Anglican Communion. The Anglican Church of Burundi wishes to commend it as a working document in the process of pastoral care within the Communion so that channels for constructive dialogue and fellowship with Provinces of the Anglican Communion may be maintained in the future. The Anglican Church of Burundi remains committed to the Anglican Communion and to endeavouring to work with all the Primates who have been entrusted with leadership of its Provinces. We are committed to the Gospel imperative to maintain unity and communion that is rooted in truth and love. We are called to be a "one, holy, catholic and apostolic" church and to affirm loyalty to the authority of Scripture and the traditional teachings of the Church. Though we recognise the principle of unity in diversity, Scripture should remain our guide in all matters of doctrine, ethics and decision-making. As has become apparent, we ignore Biblical teaching, the Apostolic Faith, and Church practice at our peril, and compromise our unity, fellowship, and communion. We must pray that we shall find ways to move forward with renewed commitment to "keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Eph.4v3) We recognise the interdependence of Provinces and the responsibilities that we have towards one another. We regret, however, that decisions taken by some Provinces have led to a fracturing of the unity of the Church to such an extent that it has threatened the future of the Anglican Communion as a communion. It is regrettable that these decisions also threaten our relationships with other denominations, and the mission and witness of the Church in a world that is already confused in areas of sexuality, morality and theology. We recommend therefore that our relationships should be guided by the decisions of the 1998 Lambeth Conference Resolution I. 10 and Resolution III. 2(e), the Windsor Report recommendations, and the Dromantine requests. As those called to fulfill the Great Commission of Christ, we need to find ways to join together under God's grace and, with repentance and faith, encourage one another in the work of the Kingdom. We need to continue to prayerfully encourage understanding and dialogue and re-assess structures and ways of drawing closer to each other rather than walking apart. Such should be the spirit of our communion. We support the idea of an Anglican Covenant and trust that it will, as the recent Kigali Communiqué states, "demonstrate to the world that it is possible to be a truly global communion where differences are not affirmed at the expense of faith and truth but within the framework of a common confession of faith and mutual accountability". Finally, we believe that hope for the Anglican Communion is dependent on the Church worldwide earnestly seeking a deep work of the Holy Spirit that will lead to repentance, forgiveness, revival, and healing. We should work for a Church characterised by justice and compassion that strives to be a sanctuary of care where the truth can be told with love. Only then will we be able to meet the challenge to walk together in a way that honours the name of Christ whom we seek to serve, and witness to his reconciling love in a hurting and fragmented world. Issued: Bujumbura October 2006 The Most Rev. Bernard NTAHOTURI Archbishop of Burundi