

# A bridge too far

□ **Canterbury's response to recent developments in US Episcopal Church goes well beyond provisions of Anglican Covenant**



By Dr  
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'constitutional provisions which cannot be overturned by any one person's decision alone, and there will have to be further consultation as to how they are affected.'

In other words this is Rowan Williams' personal call and he will pursue similar actions with these other bodies in due course.

The Secretary General, Kenneth Kearon, wrote less than a fortnight later to report that he had written to all those people from The Episcopal Church on ecumenical dialogue groups of the Anglican Communion that their membership of these groups had been discontinued. He also wrote to the American member of the IASCUFO withdrawing her membership and inviting her to serve as a consultant on the group. He had written to The Anglican Church in Canada seeking clarification about the blessing of same sex unions in that church.

He also said he wanted two other matters addressed. The responsibility of a Province for the actions of a bishop in that Province, and whether a bishop in one province engaged in a cross border intervention without the express permission of the province concerned constitutes a breach of the third moratorium.

The question here is if a bishop in Australia engaged in a cross border intervention in, say, Malaysia - would that be the responsibility of the Anglican Church of Australia or would it be a matter for the Anglican Communion in relation to the Anglican Church of Australia. In other words if we can't or won't do something then maybe the Anglican Communion would act against the Anglican Church of Australia.

The Secretary General stated that the Archbishop had been forced to act before the covenant had been considered by most provinces because of the consecration of Mary Glasspool.

Rowan Williams claimed in his letter that the Covenant 'is not envisaged as an instrument of control'. It has been repeatedly claimed that the covenant would not intervene in the canonical jurisdiction of any province. Perhaps the Secretary General has not read those parts

of the debate so far.

Both Rowan Williams' proposals and Kenneth Kearon's actions seem to me to represent a radical change in the way the commissions and other bodies of the Anglican Communion actually work and the way people are appointed to them.

In general provinces are not consulted formally about such appointments. They are certainly not asked to decide who in their province is to be a member. Appointments are made on the basis of a combination of considerations especially their competence in relation to the particular group concerned. Clearly there will be some balancing of dispositions within the group and some sense of spread around the provinces.

In my experience on such bodies if a question came up as to the view of the Anglican Church of Australia people would describe that as best they could. Suggesting that members of these groups should not include anyone from a particular province simply on the ground that they come from that province, even when the province is in some dispute with the Instruments of Communion, is simply to turn personal membership into some form of institutional representative.

In relation to the ecumenical dialogues it is a folly to allow our partners to set how we construct our membership. These groups are appointed to explore the issues and see if some agreement can be reached. They can then report back to whoever has the authority to deal with those things. The groups are not plenipotentiary negotiators.

Framing the dialogues in this way misrepresents the character of the parent body of the groups, in this case the Anglican Communion. To move in the direction proposed by Rowan Williams takes away from our ecumenical conversation partners an experience of the real character of our ecclesiology.

These actions by Rowan Williams and Kenneth Kearon appear to be more interventionist than anything proposed in the covenant and certainly are a bridge too far.

**The Rev'd Dr Bruce Kaye** runs a Blog on Anglican matters at <http://worldanglicanismforum.blogspot.com>

*The Archbishop's Pentecost message and some explanatory notes can be found at <http://www.aco.org/acns/news.cfm/2010/5/28/ACNS4704>*

## Mental Health awareness: Listen very carefully for I will say this only once

□ **Why don't people listen to me?**

by **Mark Cooper**

Fiona Brown is a Chaplain at the Chisholm Ross Center (CRC), the mental health ward of Goulburn Base Hospital.

She runs a writing group for the patients where they can express their thoughts and feelings. I was struck by the following piece as I feel it resonates with my previous articles about the need to listen, really listen to what people are saying about how they feel.

*I have never been able to be relaxed in CRC or in the community as people laugh, snigger, talk behind my back and have the wrong view of me, except meeting L and being relaxed for she knows who I am.*

*And now for what ever reason people in CRC don't seem to be judging me and I don't judge them and now I feel some what at peace here so I can gather my thoughts and my mind day by day and hope all my fears of judgment just blow away.*

*Before I was usually here I was ill, very ill. But now with help and the right people listening to me it is a struggle within but I feel there is hope of a better day and a better future than before.*

When we listen to people we are usually preparing what we are going to say next rather than actually trying to understand what

they are saying and why they think that. Active listening is hard work because it's not about being right and winning the argument and it isn't about just accepting or believing everything the other person has to say. It is about trying to understand what they have said and why they have said it.

To actively listen to another person has a physical side as well as a mental side. It involves relaxing your body and adopting a friendly posture. You need to give audible cues to the person you're listening to that you are hearing them.

Asking questions of clarification help tell the person that you want to understand what they are saying. If you do this then you are more likely to receive a fair hearing of your point of view when you respond.

In the middle of a general conversation people will give you an opportunity to talk about what they really want to discuss if you listen for it. We all like to be listened to and we feel good inside when someone has understood what we have said.

This is even more important when you are not well and feel vulnerable.

As the patient in Fiona's writing group said, being listened to made a big difference in how he was feeling.

**The Reverend Mark Cooper** serves as Diocesan Chaplain to Mental Health and also as Sub-Dean at St Saviour's Cathedral, Goulburn.

## HOME in Queanbeyan to be opened this week

Sir William Deane will formally open the *HOME in Queanbeyan* project on Thursday, July 1

Sir William is patron of the project, which will provide 24 hour care for people with chronic mental illness who are without proper shelter, care, love and support.

The facility will also offer short term respite care.

It comprises of domestic-styled accommodation, providing 20 appropriately designed one-bedroom units with ensuite, catering for 15 long term residents and five respite care residents.

HOME is not intended to be

a secure facility; rather it will be one in which residents would be free to come and go as they please. It will be their 'Home' and will have the appearance of a domestic residential facility.

Ancillary facilities include a commercial kitchen, communal dining and recreation areas, spaces for 24 hour accommodation of carers and health professionals and it will house the St Benedict's Day Centre facility.

The Anglican parish of Christ Church has provided the land for the project, which was the brainchild of the previous rector of Queanbeyan, Michael Cockayne OAM.