



The Archbishops and Primates
of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

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To the bishops, clergy and lay people of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

Grace and Peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The General Synod, Te Hinota Whanui of this Church meeting in Napier from May 6th – May 12th 2016 asked us, as the Primates and Archbishops of this Church, to appoint a working group to endeavour to identify “*possible structural arrangements within our Three-Tikanga Church to safeguard both theological convictions concerning the blessing of same gender relationships*”. (Note: Please see the full text of the motion attached at the end of this letter).

We are very aware of a number of informal conversations on these matters that are currently taking place across our Church. We believe that such informal discussions and explorations of possible structural mechanisms are very helpful and are to be encouraged.

We are very conscious that Tikanga Maori and Tikanga Pasifika were in a position to support the provisions proposed in the “A Way Forward” Report, its recommendations and the accompanying draft legislation. While the challenge was clearly issued at GSTHW to Tikanga Pakeha to identify “*possible structural arrangements*”, nonetheless, as Primates we are clear that this is a task ‘of the whole Church, for the whole Church’.

We are also clear that any possible structural arrangements need to be consistent with Anglican ecclesiology and with Te Pouhere, the Constitution of this three Tikanga Church.

Therefore, we wish to outline the following time line:

1. We want to encourage wide discussion and to provide a space for this to take place. Consequently, there will be a period of just on four months for networks, organisations, informal groupings and individuals to identify possible structures for consideration by the Working Group which we will appoint.
2. The Working Group will be named on **1 September 2016**. We will make this appointment having taken terms of reference and suggested membership to the General Synod Standing Committee meeting in Western Samoa from 23 to 26 July 2016.



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3. We would ask that any formal suggestions of possible structural arrangements are in the hands of the General Secretary of this Church no later than **1 October 2016**.
4. Such suggestions do not need to be formed in detail but can be 'high level' suggestions.
5. The Working Group will consider each suggestion and may also identify other possibilities. The Working Group will provide feedback to proposers and to the wider Church by the end of **January 2017**.
6. The Working Group will finalise a proposal (or set of proposals) for the consideration of the Church by the 1 July 2017 date asked for by General Synod 2016.

Most importantly, we call upon the Church to be constant in prayer and discernment of the leading of God's Holy Spirit in these matters.

We offer this prayer for the use of the Church:

*God of grace,
 You knit us together as one family in our Three Tikanga Church.
 We pray your blessing upon us as we continue to discern the path ahead.
 When we are fearful, show us your compassion,
 When we are unclear, show us your light.
 Above all, may your grace and love abound,
 And may we be constantly reminded that it is your mission we serve in our world,
 May we be good and faithful servants of your will,
 May we be heralds of the Kingdom in all that we seek to be and do,
 To you we pray O God, creator, redeemer and giver of life
Amen.*

Yours in Christ,

+ Winston Halapua

Archbishop Winston Halapua
 Bishop of Polynesia

+ P. Richardson

Archbishop Philip Richardson
 Senior Bishop of New Zealand Dioceses

+ Brown Turei

Archbishop Brown Turei
 Bishop of Aotearoa

**The Primate and Archbishops of the Anglican Church
 in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia**



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