

B R U C E G R A Y Q C

B A R R I S T E R

5 August 2015

Reverend Michael Hughes
General Secretary
Anglican Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

Dear Michael

Thank you for your request for a report from the "A Way Forward" Working Group which may be circulated to Amorangi and to Diocese for their Hui and Diocesan Synods.

We are mindful of the interest all members of the Church have in our work. We feel the prayerful support of members of our Church.

Motion 30 adopted by the last General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui directed us to consider and recommend for consideration a form of blessing for a same gender relationship.

Motion 30 affirms traditional marriage. We acknowledge this affirmation.

We acknowledge too our direction to protect the integrity of those who cannot agree to perform same gender blessings.

The report of the Commission on Doctrine and Theological Questions presented to the General Synod Standing Committee and the Ma Whea? Commission in March 2014 recorded the different views within our Church in respect of marriage and gender.

We have considered that, as Members of the Body of Christ, we do not ourselves bless – we recognise that which God has blessed. We express the blessing.

We are considering the mechanisms and liturgies by which a same sex relationship might be blessed and which could be recommended to General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui for its consideration. We are considering the ways in which such a blessing is similar to but different from marriage. Our consideration includes mechanisms to protect those who cannot agree to perform such a blessing.

Any blessing of same gender relationships which could be regarded as Right Ordered would be an important change for the Church – and be a change which probably would need the approval of two successive General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui (with a two thirds majority at the second of these), and of a majority of Diocesan Synods and Hui Amorangi between them. This is the procedure provided for by the Church of England Empowering

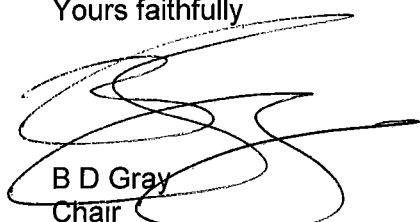
Act 1928. This procedure would also include an opportunity for an appeal to a Tribunal established under that Act.

We are still in the process of final design of a proposal which General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui can consider. It is premature for us to say any more than we do in this letter.

We expect to report in the early months of 2016, in time for a Motion to be considered by General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui. We are appointed by General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui and we consider we should report first to that body. We expect debate within each Diocese/Amorangi will occur as part of a process that requires consideration at two General Synods/Te Hinota Whanui, and at Diocesan Synods/Hui Amorangi in between.

We ask for the continued prayer of our Church and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Yours faithfully

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

B D Gray
Chair

"A Way Forward" Working Group