

The Episcopal Church of Liberia Covenant

A COVENANT between THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF LIBERIA (ECL) and THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE USA (PECUSA)

Approved by the Liberia Covenant Committee October 2001

Approved by Executive Council of The Episcopal Church, February 2002

I. Short History of the ECL

The Episcopal Church of Liberia and the Episcopal Church of the United States have a long history of mutual involvement in the ministry of Jesus Christ. It formally began in 1836 with the sending of missionaries and the subsequent establishment of the episcopate in the years following. A Covenant Agreement was adopted by both churches in 1979, in their respective Conventions. A part of that Covenant called for ECL to become a part of, and to give leadership to, the Province of West Africa. That was accomplished in the early 1980s. ECUSA and ECL have remained in Covenant because of our historic relationships, with both working to support the Province of West Africa.

ECL has now been through a devastating period of over twenty years of civil unrest, including a seven-year period in the ravages of war. This becomes an appropriate time to review and revise the original Covenant Agreement. The Covenant Committee of both churches recommends the following points for guidance in our future partnership in Christ's ministry. These points represent the basis of a revised Covenant Agreement. In all of this we will pray for each other to be guided by the Holy Spirit.

II. General Convention Resolution to Approve Autonomy

66th General Convention, 1979:

House of Deputies

On the sixth day, the Committee on Structure presented its Report #26 on Resolution A-110, and recommended adoption of the Resolution with additional Resolves:

Whereas, the 65th General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America (PECUSA) did, by Resolution, commend and support the historic step of the Episcopal Church of Liberia (ECL) in becoming an Associate Member of the Church of the Province of West Africa (CPWA);

And

Whereas, ECL has set 1982 as its target date for constitutional autonomy and 1990 for full independence, with the encouragement of PECUSA; and

Whereas, it is the desire of both PECUSA and ECL that the long and historical association between the two Churches should not be completely severed but that there should be developed a new relationship consonant with severed but that there should be developed a new relationship consonant with ECL's membership in CPWA; and

Whereas, the 65th General Convention of PECUSA did Authorize the Joint Commission on World Mission and Standing Committee on structure of the church to study the implications of ECL's membership in CPWA and make recommendations within the true spirit of Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence (MRI_ in the Body of Christ

for new relationships between PECUSA and the overseas Diocese which have had a long and historical association with PECUSA, and which overseas Diocese, in the development of new association, may still desire some kind of continuing relationship with PECUSA; and

Whereas, Representatives of PECUSA and Representatives of ECL, in pursuance of said authorization, have met and had discussions in a spirit of true understanding and friendship and have arrived at mutually acceptable agreements: therefore be it

***Resolved*, the House of Bishops concurring, that the 66th General Convention of the Episcopal Church meeting in Colorado does agree and covenant with the Episcopal Church of Liberia and does commit itself to this covenant for the planning of autonomy with the Episcopal Church of Liberia as follows:**

- 1. That ECL confirms its intention to become a full member of CPWA.**
- 2. That there will be established a Joint Committee of Consultation to be made up of members from ECL and PECUSA. The CPWA will be invited to membership in this Committee the Committee's task will be to consult cooperate and offer advice on missionary activities which will include, but not limited to, Partnerships-in-Mission, Spiritual Renewal, Stewardship development plans, educational, health and agricultural programs, the training and development of Clergy and theologians, and other shared programs.**
- 3. That, prior to ECL becoming a full member of CPWA, ECL with the assistance of PECUSA will develop Pension Schemes for ECL Clergy and other employees of the Diocese.**

CONCURRENT ACTIONS

- 4. That, because of its historic nature as the only religious and privately supported institution of higher learning in sub-Saharan Africa, PECUSA will continue to give moral and financial assistance to ECL in its support of Cuttington University College.**
- 5. The ECL may seek and PECUSA will encourage the development of Companion Diocese relationships between ECL and Diocese of PECUSA.**
- 6. That PECUSA will continue to promote the Venture in Mission project at Kabilia; will carry out the financial aid as outlined in the projection entitled, "Episcopal Diocese of Liberia-Budget Projection form 1976-1986"; and will assist in seeking sources of capital funds for development; all of which is looking forward to full financial independence for ECL in 1990.**
- 7. That the Bishop of Liberia shall be invited to be a collegial member of the House of Bishops of PECUSA; and that a means shall be provided by the Rules of Order of the House of Deputies to enable representatives of ECL to "seat and voice" in the House of deputies of PECUSA.**
- 8. That upon request and recommendation of the Bishop of Liberia, the House of Bishops will appoint an Episcopal Partner to consult with him.**
- 9. That the ECL will make an annual voluntary contribution to the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief.**

- 10. That this Covenant will become effective upon approval by both the Diocesan Convention of Liberia and the General Convention of PECUSA.**
- 11. That ECL will provide PECUSA with a complete copy of the Constitution and Canons of ECL and of CPWA, in accordance with regulations of the Anglican Consultative Council.**
- 12. This Covenant Shall be subject to review not less than every three years to enable changes and modifications as may become necessary, and will continue in force until agreement by both parties to terminate;**

And be it further

Resolved, that in accordance with the terms of item 12 of the Covenant, the Executive Council be authorized to act on behalf of PECUSA; and be it further

Resolved, That such review Shall include and reports and recommendations made by the members of the Joint Committee of Consultation referred to in item 2 of the Covenant; and be it further

Resolved, That the members of the Joint Committee of Consultation representing the PECUSA be appointed by the Presiding Bishop.

Deputy Paul Frank (Ohio) of the World Mission Committee Spoke on behalf of the Committee.

Discussion followed. Deputy Allen Bartlett (Kentucky) questioned how the matter in seating members of the Covenant to this House will be handled. Deputy Wainwright explained that that would be covered in a separate piece of legislation to come before the House at a later time.

The question was called on the Resolution as amended by the Committee.

Resolution adopted

[Communicated to the House of Bishops in HD Message No. 67]

House of Bishops

On the seventh day, HD Message No. 67 on Resolution A-110 amended was received.

The House concurred

[Communicated to the House of Deputies in HB Message No. 116]

III. Covenant Document

1. ECUSA will assist ECL in the renovations of church related buildings, including such facilities as schools, clinics, and hospitals. It will also help in providing supplies and other aids, as outlined in the Five-Year Plan for 2001-2005.
2. ECUSA will continue to give moral and financial assistance to ECL in its support of Cuttington University College.
3. ECUSA will collaborate with ECL in the recruitment and training of appropriate candidates for ordination, to serve in Liberia.

4. ECUSA and ECL will work together to develop and operate outreach programs to assist Liberians who have lost their homes, possessions, and means of livelihood as a result of civil conflict. This may include providing such items as farm equipment, clothing, food, medical supplies, and the encouragement and empowerment of local small businesses.
5. ECUSA will continue to support the annual operating budget of ECL with the understanding that the amount of support may decline each year until ECL has eventually achieved full financial independence.
6. ECUSA and ECL will develop strategies to work together in partnership to accomplish these goals. Of great importance is the exchange of people to share the ministry of Christ through different spiritualities, cultures, and skills. We see parish to parish companionships to be beneficial for both churches.
7. ECUSA will render assistance to ECL in the review and updating of its Pension Plan for clergy and qualified church workers.
8. The Bishop of Liberia shall continue to be a collegial member of the House of Bishops of ECUSA. Representatives of ECL shall continue to be provided, through the Rules of Order, a "seat and voice" in the House of Deputies of ECUSA, when that body meets.
9. A Joint Committee of Consultation (the Covenant Committee), including members of ECUSA and ECL, will continue to consult, cooperate, and offer advice on a regular basis.
10. This Covenant shall be subject to review and modification as may become necessary and will continue in effect until agreement by both parties to terminate.

IV. Covenant Committee Members

Diocese of Liberia (Church of the Province of West Africa)

The Rt. Rev. Edward W. Neufville, II 1996	Ms. Comfort Natt (Chancellor of Diocese)
Mr. Sandei A. Cooper Sr. Treasurer of Diocese	Mrs. Juanita Neal JAIFAN Consultants Chairman, Board of Trustees
Ms. Amelia Ward (Chair, Planning and Development Committee for Diocese)	Mr. Clemenceau Urey Chairman, Church Pension Fund Board CEO, Atlantic Life Insurance

PECUSA Members

Dr. Deborah Harmon-Hines Longest serving member	The Rev. Emmanuel Sserwadda Partnership Officer for Africa
The Rt. Rev. Gordon Paul Scruton Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts	Heather Payton Standing Commission for World Mission heatherleighpayton@yahoo.com
Ms. Sandra McPhee Executive Council Representative	The Very Rev. Dr. C. David Williams
Rita Tams Redfield	

V. Companion Diocese Relations

<u>Los Angeles</u>	<u>Liberia (West Africa)</u>
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