



THE PROVINCE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF RWANDA

THE CONSTITUTION

*Adopted in Provincial Synod
Kigali, Rwanda
November 2007*

SOLEMN DECLARATION - PREAMBLE

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

The Anglican Church of Rwanda (Anglican Communion) hereinafter also called "The Church of Rwanda" or "This Church" shall be in full communion with all Anglican Churches Dioceses and Provinces that hold and maintain the Historic Faith, Doctrine, Sacrament and Discipline of the one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church as the Lord has commanded in His holy word and as the same has received and set forth the same in the Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, together with the Psalter and the Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, and in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion.

We declare this Church to be, and desire that it shall continue in full communion with traditional Anglicans throughout the world, as an integral portion of the One Body of Christ composed of Churches which, united under the One Divine Head and in fellowship of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, hold the One Faith revealed in Holy Writ, and defined in the Creeds as maintained by the undivided primitive Church in the undisputed Ecumenical Councils; receive the same Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as containing all things necessary to salvation; teach the same Word of God; partake of the same Divinely ordained Sacraments, through the ministry of the same Apostolic Orders; and worship One God and Father through the same Lord Jesus Christ, by the same Holy and Divine Spirit who is given to them that believe to guide them into all truth.

We, the Bishops, together with the Clergy and Laity of the Anglican Province of Rwanda assembled in Provincial Synod, make this Solemn Declaration and we are determined by the help of God to hold and maintain the Doctrine, Sacraments, and Discipline of Christ as the Lord has commanded in His Holy Word.

FOREWORD

In the Name of God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Let it be known that the Anglican Consultative Council and the Synod of the Francophone Province of Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire agreed to create the Province of Rwanda; and whereas the Constitution of the Province of Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire provides for the separation and creation of other provinces (see Article 1 of Francophone Province Constitution (BRZ); the meeting of Bishops of the Church of Rwanda convened on the 19th of June 1992 and resolved to provisionally apply said Constitution until such time the Church adopts a constitution for this Province.

Let it be known that the Synod of this Province adopted its own Constitution on 28 April 1998 in its role as the highest legislative body of the Church. The Synod of November 2007 amends that Constitution in the following form:

I) THE ORDER AND STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH OF RWANDA

ARTICLE 1 - *Of the Identity of his Church*

It has been resolved that the created Province of the Episcopal Church of Rwanda abbreviated in French as PEER shall now be known as the Anglican Church of Rwanda, (also known as the Church of Rwanda {Anglican}- PEAR)

Section 1 – The Anglican Church of Rwanda is one of the churches originated from Holly, Catholic and Universal Church; apostolic and worshipping one living God, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. It shall remain one united and indissoluble Church under God with our faith is based on the Scriptures and its role is to spread that faith.

Section 2:

- a) The Anglican Church of Rwanda is as a member of the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church functions in its administration, according to its canonical and conciliar tradition of the whole church, and works in communion with other orthodox Anglican churches around the world.
- b) The Church of Rwanda respects the sovereignty of the country and considers itself as a member of Rwandan society.

ARTICLE 2 - *Of the Nature of This Province*

The Provincial Office of the Anglican Church of Rwanda is located in the Gasabo District of Kigali City

Section 1 - The Attribution of this Province is to coordinate the activities and ministries of the Diocese of the Anglican Church of Rwanda

- a) To honor God in worship
- b) To evangelize, and promote the Good News of God in Christ and the adherence to the teaching and examples of Jesus Christ;
- b) To promote Christian education, values and morals;
- c) To assist in the care and welfare of God's people, particularly the poor, the aged and the needy;
- d) To provide for the spiritual welfare of her members;
- e) To fulfill the commands of the Great Commission
- f) To undertake all other things which are reasonable, necessary, moral and legal to the establishing of the Gospel.
- g) Enhancing the unity of the Diocese and Missionary Endeavors of t his Province.

Section 2 – The Jurisdictions

The Province covers the entire territory of the Republic of Rwanda. The Provincial Synod possesses the authority to create Dioceses who are members of this Province. Those Dioceses are:

- a) *Kigali*
- b) *Metropolitan*
- c) *Butare*
- d) *Shyira*
- e) *Kigeme*
- f) *Shyogwe*
- g) *Cyangugu*
- h) *Kibungo*
- i) *Gahini*
- j) *Byumba*
- k) *Kivu*

Section 3 – The Composition of the Church

- a) The structure of The Church of Rwanda shall be composed by: Province, Diocese, Archdeaconry, Missionary Jurisdictions, Districts, Deaneries, Parish and Church.
- b) *The Province*: It is constitutional framework of the Church and is composed of by the Dioceses and Missionary Jurisdictions of the Church of Rwanda. This Province is headed by the Primate and Archbishop. The Province of Rwanda with its constituent parts shall function on the basis of the covenant and solemn declarations expressed in this Constitution
- c) *Diocese*: Is the fundamental unit of structure of the Anglican Church of Rwanda whereby Parishes and other ecclesiastical ministries function in a particular area in where there is established a seat for an bishop ordinary. Each Diocese in the Anglican Church of Rwanda has the power to structure and organize itself in such manner as that Diocese shall from time to time determine and accord to the norms of the Constitution and Canons of this Province.
1. Every fully organized Diocese shall have a Diocesan Synod consisting of the Diocesan Bishop, a House of Clergy and a House of Laity in accordance with the Provincial Constitution and Canons to govern its administration.
- d) *Parish*: It is an organizational unit comprising of at least three local churches. This unit is lead by a Pastor and included the *Local Church*, which is the base of the Church organized on a local level within an area which may be is lead by a Catechist

ARTICLE 3 - Of the Governance of the Church

The Legislative Structure of the Province is:

- a) The Provincial Synod
- b) The Provincial Council
- c) The College of Bishops

ARTICLE 4: - The Attributions of Synod

- a) There shall be a Provincial Synod of this Church, as the highest organ governing the Church of Rwanda consisting of delegates from the House of Bishops, the House of Clergy and the House of Laity.
- b) The Provincial Synod establishes the policies of administration of the Church. It has the authority to establish a consultative council, commissions and other committees which can assist the Church in accomplishing its mission in accord with this constitution and canons.
- c) Synod exists to consider matters concerning the Anglican Church of Rwanda and make provision for the administration of its affairs and for the promotion of the spiritual welfare and well being of its members by Canons, Regulations, Resolutions, Directives or other instruments as may be appropriate.
- d) The Synod defines, establishes and approves the Constitution and Canons of this Province
- e) The Provincial Synod shall elect the Provincial Secretary through ordinary vote and approves the appointment of the Treasurer of the Province and the Chancellor. It may appoint and other staff and leaders according to the need and financial capacity of the Province.

Section 1 – The Convening of Synod

- a) The Provincial Synod meets once every four years at the place designated by such Synod; but if there shall appear to the Primate of the Church sufficient cause for changing the place or date so appointed, he may appoint another place or date, or both, for such meeting. Special meetings may be provided for by Canon
- b) It may be convened for an extraordinary session as for reasons set forth in the canons.
- c) The invitations of the Provincial Synod are sent 30 days prior to the meeting
1. The invitations to an extraordinary are sent 15 days prior to the meeting upon request from half of the delegates of every college, written and sent to the Archbishop, or to the Dean when the

Archbishop is absent. If both of them are absent, they are sent to the Diocesan Bishop senior in tenure.

d) The Primate of the Church of Rwanda shall be President of the Synod and shall preside at all sessions thereof. In his absence, the Dean of the Province shall preside, in his absence the Bishop senior by consecration, shall preside.

e) The number of delegates from each Diocese or Missionary Jurisdiction in the Provincial Synod is determined by the Synod itself. The number can increase or decrease as is necessary.

e) Representatives/Delegates of a Diocese in Provincial Synod includes at least one Bishop, one Pastor, one lay man, one lay woman and one lay representing youth .

f) Two Thirds of the registered and certified delegates of the every House shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business; provided that each of the Houses respectively, shall be represented by at least one delegate from each of a majority of Dioceses or Missionary Jurisdictions entitled to representation.

1.If the quorum is not realized, another meeting is convened within 15 days.

2. In such a case the quorum is one half (50%) of the number for every house

Section 2 - Of the Function of the Synod

Synod as hereby constituted shall be the legislative body of the Church and every enactment, resolution or directive requires a *two thirds* (2/3) majority votes of the delegates at Synod. Synod shall have effect and be binding upon the Church; every Ecclesiastical Institution and Diocese therein and upon all officers and members thereof are, subject as hereinafter provided the Provincial Synod shall have authority and jurisdiction in all matters affecting in any way, the general interest and well-being of the Church through constitutions or canons particularly:

- a) the constitution and organization of the Provincial Synod
- b) the identity , constitution, integrity and autonomy of the Church of Rwanda
- c) the relations of this Church to other religious bodies in Rwanda and elsewhere
- d) the relations of this Church to other Churches of the Anglican Communion;
- e) the establishment of minimum standards of theological education and minimum qualifications and training of candidates for the Ministry of the Church
- f) the administration of all funds and trusts established in respect to this Church
- g) the discipline of Clergy and of Laity of the Province of Rwanda as provided for through the canons, constitution and powers of and procedures therein of ecclesiastical courts
- h) the sub-division of the Church into more Provinces and the Constitution of a new Dioceses or Missionary Jurisdiction
- i) any revisions, adaptations or publication of a Book of Common Prayer and a Hymnal for the Church

Section 3 – The Provincial Synod, nor its constituent members has no authority to depart from the Scriptures as received, Doctrine of the Church nor Sacraments of Christ as defined in the Solemn Declarations of this Constitution

ARTICLE 5 - Of the Provincial Council

The Provincial Council is established by the Synod of the Province to oversee and implement the decision and duties of the Provincial Synod. It is chaired by the Archbishop or his delegate

Section 1 – The Provincial Council is composed of

- a) The Archbishop who serves as Chair
- b) The Dean of the Province
- c) All Bishops of the Province with jurisdiction

- d) One Priest from each Diocese from each diocese, elected by the Provincial Synod among its delegates and from missionaries from within the Province and extra-provincially
- e) One member of the laity from each diocese, elected by the Provincial Synod among its delegates and from missionaries from within the Province and extra-provincially
- f) The Provincial Secretary is *ex-officio*

Section 2 – The Provincial Council holds its regular meetings annually and at any time as deemed necessary

- a) by request of members of the Council to the Archbishop
- b) as requested by the Archbishop to the members of the Council

Section 3- The Provincial Secretary of the Synod shall prepare a written report in summary form of all matters considered and dealt with by the Provincial Council since the last regular meeting of the Provincial Council not less than thirty days prior to each regular meeting of the synod which shall be presented by the Provincial Secretary at the Synod.

ARTICLE 6 – Of the College of Bishops

The College of Bishops is composed of:

- a) The Archbishop
- b) All Diocesan Bishops
- c) The Primate Vicar for the Missionary Bishops
- d) The Provincial Secretary is *ex-officio* without vote.

Section 1 – The College meets four times a year for ordinary session and may be convened for extraordinary sessions as deemed necessary

- a) by request of members of the College to the Archbishop
- b) as requested by the Archbishop to the members of the College

Section 2 - The College of Bishops has the following responsibilities

- a) It is the custodian of matters of faith and order, spiritual instructions and Church unity within the Province
- b) To uphold the Anglican norms and traditions within the Province
- c) To uphold and support the programs and strategies of the Province
- d) To elect the Archbishop, Diocesan Bishops, Suffragan Bishops and Missionary Bishops
- e) To appoint Assistant Bishops
- f) To give oversight to the roles and responsibilities to the Bishops according to the Provincial Canons

Section 3- The Dean

The Dean of the Province is the Bishop with the longest tenure of service as Diocesan Bishop .

- a) The Dean serves as the Archbishop's Vicar in his absence and assumes certain rights and responsibilities as set provided for in the Canons of the Province of the Anglican Church of Rwanda.

ARTICLE 7 – Of the Archbishop

Section 1 - There shall be elected an Archbishop elected from among the Bishops of the Diocese by the House of Bishops according to the criteria established in the Canons of this Province. Once elected and installed, he shall hold office under and have privileges, powers, authority and duties as defined by the

Constitutions and Canons made by the Provincial Synod and shall exercise all the rights and perform all the duties of the Archbishop.

- a) Every Diocesan Bishop **who has reached the age of 55 is eligible for election to the office of Archbishop providing he meets the criteria as set forth in the canons.**
- b) The process for election is set forth in the Provincial Canons

Section 2 - The Archbishop shall convene and preside over meetings of the Synod, House of Bishops and the Provincial Council. He is the principal minister of the Church of Rwanda . In his absence the Dean of the Province may fulfill his responsibilities to and with the Synod.

Section 3 – The Archbishop shall be an ex-officio member of all Committees, Boards, Commissions and Councils of this Province in accord with the Constitution or of any Canon enacted

Section 4 - The Archbishop shall have the following pastoral responsibilities -

- a) to have a general authority and supervision over the whole of the Church of Rwanda in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and the Canons of the Church.
- b) to confirm the appointment of any person duly elected a Bishop for the Church of Rwanda and to arrange for his consecration if he be not already consecrated.
- c) to preside when he is so required by Canons at the hearing of appeals in accordance with the provisions of this Church concerning the trial of a Bishop, the Clergy, and/or Laity and also on other occasions when the House of Bishops sits as a court.
- d) to visit officially the Dioceses and Missionary Jurisdictions of the Church of Rwanda.
- e) to represent the Anglican Church of Rwanda in its relationship with the rest of the Anglican Communion and other orthodox Anglican bodies. He also meets and corresponds with other Primate.
- f) to perform such other functions prescribed by this Constitution or as may from time to time be entrusted to him by the Synod or House of Bishops.

Section 5 - The office of the Archbishop shall become vacant when -

- a) he dies;
- b) he has held office for ten years and chooses not to extend this ministry for another two years to total twelve years from the date of his presentation
- c) when he attains the age of seventy years, whichever first occurs;
- d) Having given notice of his intention to resign or retire, the Synod has accepted the resignation.
- e) he is found guilty of ecclesiastical charges by ecclesiastical court and is removed from office

ARTICLE 8 - *Of the Bishops of this Church*

Section 1 - Every Diocesan Bishop, Coadjutor, Suffragan or Missionary Bishop of this Province shall be elected by the House of Bishops in accordance with the process and criteria established in the Canons and Regulations made under the Constitution and Canons of this Province and adapted by the jurisdiction

Section 2 - A bishop for any Diocese or Missionary Jurisdiction may be elected from among the Bishops or Clergy of any Diocese or Missionary Jurisdiction of the Church of Rwanda or of any orthodox Diocese, Missionary Jurisdiction or Network in communion with the Anglican Church of Rwanda and who meets the criteria as set forth in the Provincial Canons

Section 3 – The process for nominating a person to become a bishop other than those specifically provided for in the Canons shall be prescribed by the House of Bishops and the endorsement of the Synod

Section 4- The tenure of a Bishop shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Canons or Regulations made by the Synod.

ARTICLE 9 – *Of the Dean of the Province*

Section 1 - The eldest Bishop in office following the date of enthronization or the date of ordination as Pastor is chosen as the Dean of Province.

Section 2:

- a) The Dean of Province replaces the Archbishop during a vacancy in the Office of Primate or during the illness or other incapacity of the Primate.
- b) The Dean of the Church of Rwanda shall have authority to perform all the duties of the Primacy and shall be styled Acting Primate for all his attributions according to Article 5 of the Constitution.
- c) In the absence of the Primate from any meeting of Synod or any Committee, Council, Board or Commission, constituted under this Constitution or any Canon of the synod, unless otherwise provided, the Dean or bishop senior by presentation or consecration, shall preside.

ARTICLE 10 - *Of the Provincial Secretary*

Section 1- There shall be established for the Church of Rwanda a Provincial Secretariat which shall be headed by a Provincial Secretary who shall be a Clergyman in Priests' Order elected/appointed by the Provincial Synod with the consent of the Primate.

Section 2- It shall be the duty of the Provincial Secretary to:

- a) Attend meetings of the Provincial Synod, Provincial Council and of the appropriate Committees or organizations appointed by the Provincial Council as the Primate shall direct.
- b) Carry out such administrative or other duties as the Primate or the Synod shall from time to time direct

ARTICLE 11- *On the Discipline of the Church*

Section 1: The Provincial Synod shall have exclusive authority to make canonical provisions with regard to Discipline and in particular -

- a) to determine the canonical and constitutional norms for procedures implemented on the Diocesan, Provincial levels for the exercise of Ecclesiastical discipline and establish a final court of Appeal for the purpose
- b) to prescribe and define the canonical offences for which a Bishop, Priest or Deacon or any member of the Laity of this Church may be tried.
- c) Any Bishop, Priest or Deacon of a Diocese of this Church against whom a charge is brought shall be tried in accordance with the provisions of the Canon of Ecclesiastical Discipline and the process set forth in those Canons.

Section 2 - All Orders of the Clergy resident and licensed in this Province must submit to the authority of the Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Province of Rwanda. Failure to do so will subject them to the discipline of the Church as set forth in the Canons of this Church.

II) THE DOCTRINE, FAITH AND ORDER OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF RWANDA

ARTICLE 12 – *Of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Faith*

Section 1 -The Anglican Province of Rwanda is a church in full communion with all Anglican Churches, Dioceses and Provinces that hold and maintain the orthodox Historic Faith, Doctrine, Sacraments and Discipline of the one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Faith in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We adopt the following statement as an affirmation declaration of the faith and tradition we share:

- a) The Holy Scriptures: The 66 Books of the Bible are the complete foundation and the authority of faith. They were inspired by God and contain all the necessary instruction required to lead a person to salvation
- b) The Christian Faith is summarized in the Creedal Statements found in the Apostles, Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.
- c) The Sacraments instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ namely Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist.
- d) The Articles of Religion as adapted through the ages.

Section 2 – The Provincial Synod has the authority to adopt doctrinal statements to be followed by the Church within the whole Province, provided it is in accord with the “ *faith once Delivered to the saints*”

ARTICLE 13 - *On Ordering Worship*

Section 1 - Without contradicting the above stated formularies , the Provincial Canons and Constitutions, the Provincial Synod in consultation with College of Bishops may adapt, change or revise elements if the prayers and liturgy of this church in accord with the conciliar tradition and providing that

- a) **Such interpretation must conform to the patterns of the Book of Common Prayer 1662, the Ordinal and any other orthodox norms and customaries in matters of faith and order.**

ARTICLE 14 - *On Pastoral Offices*

Section 1 -The three orders of ordained ministry found in Scripture are

- a) Bishop
- b) Priest
- c) Deacon

No person can bear or use these titles unless they are ordained according to the norms and customs of the Anglican Ordinal and have been certified as being ordained by a bishop in Communion with this Province.

Section 2 - Women may be ordained in this Province to the office of Deacon and Priest providing they meet the canonical requirements as set forth in the Canons of the Province.

III) ON HUMAN PERSONS

ARTICLE 15 – *The Value and Dignity of All Human Persons*

According to the teachings and doctrine of the Church, the Anglican Province of Rwanda believes and maintains that all people are equal and have the same rights, value and dignity before God.

Section 1 – The Anglican Province of Rwanda shall stand against any form of discrimination based on tribe, sex, race among believers and shall oppose any form of division among people.

Section 2 – The Church is called to a ministry of unity in Christ Jesus and so the Bishops, Priests and Deacons of this Province are to be instruments of integrity in divisive issues. This people of God are called to refrain from division and to live into the fullness of the Baptismal Covenant.

IV) ON THE ASSETS AND LIABILITIES OF THIS PROVINCE

Article 16 - *Funds, Assets and Liabilities of this Church*

The Funds and Finance of this Province come from contribution of the dioceses along with grants, gifts, from individual and organizations within and beyond Rwanda.

Section 1 – The contributions of diocese are prescribed by Provincial Synod.

Article 17 – *Oversight of Finances* -

The Finances of the Province are controlled by three commissioners elected by the Provincial Synod for a period of four years

Section 1 – They may be reelected by Provincial Synod for 1 additional term of four (4) years.

Section 2 - The Commissioners have the responsibility to control all accounts of the Province, all the cash books and other finance documents on the site of the location

Section 3 – They report to the Provincial Synod and the Provincial Council

Article 18 – *Oversight of Land Funds and Legacies*

The land, premises, funds and legacies are kept by managers as mandated by the Province

Section 1 – The managers are chosen by the Provincial Synod and they give regularly the global situation or detailed situation of the finances of the Province.

Section 2 -Property, of whatever nature or kind, whether movable or immovable, real or personal, which is or may be given, purchased, obtained or held for the benefit of the Church in Rwanda, shall, as soon as it is practicable, be transferred to the oversight of those charged with oversight on behalf of the Provincial Synod who shall be constituted as the Legal and Registered Agents for the Anglican Church of Rwanda.

Section 3 - *On Parish Property in Missionary Jurisdictions*

Legal title to all property utilized by local congregations shall be indefeasibly vested in the local congregation, or in a corporation owned and controlled by the local congregation, or in one or more trustees of one or more charitable land trusts that are appointed or elected by the local congregation and hold the local church property in trust for the benefit of the local congregation.

Section 4 - *Consecrated Property*

Notwithstanding the provisions of Title 1, Canon 7, Section 3 1, no Vestry, officers of the Corporation, Trustees, or other body shall alienate any consecrated Church or Chapel which has been used for Divine Service without the previous consent of the Bishop, or in the Bishop's absence, the consent of the Council of Bishops. Such consent shall not be unreasonably withheld

V) ON THE LEGISLATION PRACTICE OF THIS PROVINCE

ARTICLE 19 – In the Diocese

Each Diocese is to :

- a) Have its own Constitution and Canons
- b) The Diocesan Constitution and Canons must be approved by the Provincial Synod
- c) The Diocesan Constitution and Canons may not supersede the Provincial Constitutions and Canons. In instances where they disagree the Provincial Constitutions and Canons shall take precedent.

ARTICLE 20- The College of Bishops in relation to Provincial Legislation

Section 1- While each diocese enjoys a degree of autonomy in this Province, the College of Bishops has the right and the privilege to request of any diocese a review of any decision which does not conform with the life of the Church as established in the Constitutions and Canons of the Anglican Province of Rwanda.

Section 2 – Failure of a Diocese to comply with such a request, the College of Bishops will refer the matter to the Provincial Synod.

Section 3 - The College of Bishops in conjunction with the Provincial Council serves as the interim legislative body of the church in between the convening of the Provincial Synod. They share the responsibility of making provisional legislation in accord with the Customs and Norms of the conciliar Church.

ARTICLE 21- Amendment of this Constitution

Section 1 - Additions and amendments to any of the provisions of this Constitution may be made by the Provincial Synod and must be approved with a vote of 2/3 of the present delegates after all the Diocesan Synods are informed.

Section 2 - The Constitution is promulgated and implemented after the approval of Provincial Synod with each Bishop serving as a signatory the Diocese they represent. It shall be implemented in conjunction with the other canons and regulations of the Anglican Province of Rwanda.

The Constitution is approved by Provincial Synod meetings at its regular session, 30 November 2007 in the See City of Kigali.

Diocese of Kigali

Diocese of Butare

Diocese of Shyira

Diocese of Kigeme

Diocese of Shyogwe

Diocese of Cyangugu

Diocese of Kibungo

Diocese of Gahini