

February 6, 1978

Dear Brothers:

On January 28 in Denver, Colorado, the Rt. Rev. Albert Chambers, retired Bishop of Springfield, acted without the consent or authorization of this Church to ordain to the episcopacy four persons who had been selected to be the leaders of a new ecclesiastical body. He was joined in this act by the Rt. Rev. Francisco J. Pagtakhan of the Philippine Independent Church. After consultation with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Most Reverend Marcario Ga, Supreme Bishop of the Philippine Independent Church, I would share the following with you.

First of all, let me say that I am, of course, disappointed that the Denver ceremony took place, especially in view of the fact that we have made several attempts to effect reconciliation with leaders of the new church group. I had also counseled Bishop Chambers against taking the action he did. The House of Bishops has supported me in this reconciliation effort. There were other options available to those who participated in the Denver ceremony. I am sorry they were not taken.

I deplore the action taken by Bishop Chambers. The Supreme Bishop of the Philippine Independent Church has informed me by cable that he is shocked and distressed by the participation of Bishop Pagtakhan and that such participation was not authorized by the Philippine Independent Church. He had not been informed by Bishop Pagtakhan of the Denver ceremony in advance of January 28.

We have again been painfully reminded that bishops of the Church are not free to perform episcopal acts without proper authorization by the Church and out of the context that has been set forth by the Church for such acts.

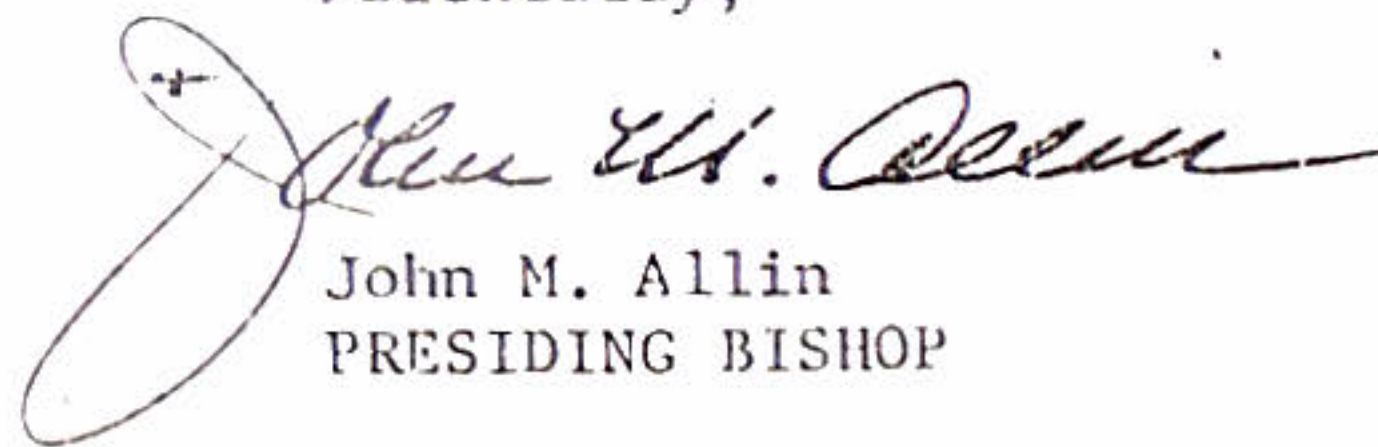
The Archbishop of Canterbury and I - both in prior conversations and lately by telephone - agree that the new ecclesiastical body is not in communion with the See of Canterbury nor in communion with this Province of the Anglican Communion.

In the wake of the Denver ceremony, I would counsel two things. The first is that we take extra precautions not to add to the confusion that has been created. I hope that each of you will make a special effort to reach out to those who might be especially attracted by the new church structure. Our people have not been forsaken by their Church. Let us exercise every means to reassure them of this truth. Secondly, I would ask that we make certain that the door is kept open to those who might wish to return to communion with us after an initial decision to leave

the Episcopal Church. Such a decision would be a hard one to make under any circumstances, and we must make it as easy as possible for any who will be having second thoughts about what they have done.

Being mindful of and striving to be obedient to our Lord's desire for unity, we know that the lessons of history clearly indicate that the forming of new church groups is rarely the means to facilitate the resolution of our differences. In these troublous days of confusion and distress, let us join in praying that we might continue to be faithful to God's will for us. In the midst of our difficulties, please know of my deep appreciation for your support, good counsel and friendship.

Faithfully,


John M. Allin
PRESIDING BISHOP

JMA/slk