

**A SHORT STUDY GUIDE
TO AID THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN RESPONDING TO
THE DRAFT ANGLICAN COVENANT
AS PREPARED BY THE COVENANT DESIGN GROUP**

Responding to the Draft Anglican Covenant

The Covenant Design Group (CDG), appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, has prepared a “Draft Anglican Covenant”¹. Every Province (Church) of the Anglican Communion has been asked to respond to this Draft by January 1, 2008.

Resolution A166 adopted by the 2006 General Convention (attached) supports the process of the development of an Anglican Covenant, as recommended by the Windsor Report, and tasks the International Concerns Standing Committee and The Episcopal Church’s members of the Anglican Consultative Council to follow this process. The International Concerns Standing Committee has recommended that the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church provide a response to the current Draft Covenant on behalf of the Episcopal Church as a whole.

All Episcopalians, including Deputies to General Convention, Bishops, members of Committees, Commissions, Agencies and Boards of the General Convention, as well as Standing Committees of Dioceses are encouraged to send their responses to: Response to the Draft Anglican Covenant, Offices of the General Convention, The Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY, 10017 by June 4, 2007. The Executive Council will then use these materials to inform its response to the Draft Covenant, which will be prepared by its October 2007 meeting. It is hoped that the views of all concerned will be expressed and reflected in the report produced by Executive Council.

This Short Study Guide has been prepared to help all Episcopalians to participate in the development of our Church’s response to the Draft Covenant. It follows the outline of *The Report of the Covenant Design Group* and offers questions for consideration at the end of each section. This Study Guide is intended to be read alongside the text of *The Report of the Covenant Design Group*.

The Report of the Covenant Design Group is in three sections: “The Report of the Covenant Design Group”, “An Introduction to a Draft Text for an Anglican Covenant”, and “An Anglican Covenant Draft”.

¹ http://www.aco.org/commission/d_covenant/index.cfm

“The Report of the Covenant Design Group”

The opening part of the Report sets the historical context leading up to the Draft Covenant and the work of the Covenant Design Group (CDG).

The third paragraph of this section refers specifically to a paper prepared for the Joint Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates, (JSC) “Towards an Anglican Covenant”.² It should be noted that the JSC’s paper was “tabled” in the work of the CDG. This meant that the paper was taken under consideration by the Covenant Design Group.

Later in the text it is noted that “other models” of possible covenant texts have already arisen in the Anglican Communion. The CDG had access to such covenants as, but not limited to: 1) the proposed Anglican Covenant in Appendix II of the Windsor Report³; 2) The “Covenant for a Communion in Mission” drafted by the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Mission and Evangelism⁴ and commended by the XIII meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council Resolution #27; 3) the draft covenant offered by a Global South Task Force, and 4) a proposal from the Anglican Church of Australia.

The Covenant Design Group asked the Primates “to recognize in the general substance of the preliminary draft set forth by the CDG a concise expression of what may be considered as authentic Anglicanism.” The 2007 Primates Meeting has commended the Report of the CDG for study.

Question:

(1) Do you think an Anglican Covenant is necessary and/or will help to strengthen the interdependent life of the Anglican Communion? Why or why not?

“An Introduction to a Draft Text for an Anglican Covenant”

This part of the report presents an initial theological introduction to the Draft Covenant which is to follow immediately afterwards. Its focus is on the nature of communion that we Anglicans share.

(2) How closely does this view of communion accord with your understanding of the development and vocation of the Anglican Communion?

² <http://www.aco.org/commission/covenant/index.cfm>

³ <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/windsor2004/>

⁴ <http://www.aco.org/mission/commissions/iascome/covenant/index.cfm>

“An Anglican Covenant Draft”

1. Preamble

Section one is the Preamble and sets out the rationale for an Anglican Covenant.

(3) Is this a sufficient rationale for entering into a Covenant? Why or why not?

2. The Life we Share

Section two seeks to articulate aspects of the faith and order shared by all of the churches of the Anglican Communion. Note that Items 2-3, affirm the first three points of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, specifically: the Holy Scriptures, the creeds, and the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist.

(4) Do these six affirmations adequately describe The Episcopal Church’s understanding of “common catholicity, apostolicity, and confession of faith”? Why or why not?

(5) The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion and the 1662 Book of Common Prayer (of the Church of England) are not currently authoritative documents for The Episcopal Church. Do you think they should be? Why or why not?

3. Our Commitment to Confession of Faith

Section three posits five specific commitments of each Church in the Anglican Communion based upon the faith and order described in part 2.

(6) Is each of these commitments clear and understandable with respect to what is being asked of the member churches and are they consistent with statements and actions made by the Episcopal Church in the General Convention? Why or why not?

4. The Life we Share with Others

Section four outlines some common elements of the Anglican Communion as we seek to work together in service to God’s mission in the world. Note the vision articulated here is consistent with that offered by the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Mission and Evangelism in their report to ACC XIII “A Communion in Mission” and underscores the “Five Marks of Mission”⁵ articulated by the Anglican Consultative Council at their meetings of 1984 and 1990.

(7) Is the mission vision offered here helpful in advancing a common life of the Anglican Communion and does this need to be a part of the Draft Covenant? Why or why not?

⁵ <http://www.aco.org/mission/fivemarks.cfm>

5. Our Unity and Common Life

Section five describes some of the structural aspects of an emerging polity (the organizing of our common life) of the Anglican Communion. Note the first affirmation picks up the fourth point of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral – the historic episcopate. The second affirmation, involving paragraphs 2-6 of this section, concerns the “mutual loyalty and service” to which the several churches of the Communion are called and thus lays out an understanding of the role of four “Instruments of Communion” (the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council, and the Primates Meeting).

(8) Does this section adequately describe your understanding of the history and respective roles of the “Four Instruments of Communion”? Why or why not?

6. Unity of the Communion

The churches of the Anglican Communion are mutually responsible and interdependent but autonomous. To date there has not been an “executive” or “judicial” body for resolving disagreements or disputes.

The Draft Covenant proposes a new process by which the Instruments of Communion can be both supported and utilized when areas of disagreement and/or difficulties between churches in the Anglican Communion arise.

Section six also refers to “a common mind about matters of essential concern. . .”

(9) Do you think there needs to be an executive or judicial body for resolving disagreements or disputes in the Anglican Communion? If so, do you think it should be the Primates Meeting as recommended by the Draft Covenant? Explain.

(10) What does the phrase “a common mind about matters of essential concern. . .” mean to you?

7. Our Declaration

The final section is a proposed signatory declaration by which each church of the Anglican Communion would commit to this proposed Covenant.

(11) Can you affirm the “fundamental shape” of the Draft Covenant? Why or why not?

(12) What do you think are the consequences of signing such a Covenant as proposed in the Draft?

Concluding Questions:

(13) Having read the Draft Covenant as a whole do you agree with the CDG's assertion that "nothing which is commended in the draft text of the Covenant can be said to be 'new'"? Why or why not?

(14) In general, what is your response to the Draft Covenant taken as a whole? What is helpful in the draft? What is not-helpful? What is missing? Additional comments?

Please send your responses by June 4, 2007 to:

Response to Draft Anglican Covenant
The Office of the General Convention
The Episcopal Church Center
815 Second Ave, New York, NY 10017
FAX: (212) 972-9322

Or respond by e-mail to gcsecretary@episcopalchurch.org

FINAL VERSION - Concurred

Resolution 2006 - A166

Title: Anglican Covenant Development Process

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, as a demonstration of our commitment to mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Anglican Communion, support the process of the development of an Anglican Covenant that underscores our unity in faith, order, and common life in the service of God's mission; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention direct the International Concerns Standing Committee of the Executive Council and The Episcopal Church's members of the Anglican Consultative Council to follow the development processes of an Anglican Covenant in the Communion, and report regularly to the Executive Council as well as to the 76th General Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention report these actions supporting the Anglican Covenant development process, noting such missiological and theological resources as the Standing Commission on World Mission and the House of Bishops' Theology Committee to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Joint Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates, and the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion; and that the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church report the same to the Primates of the churches of the Anglican Communion.