

Background Information on the proposed Anglican covenant process

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A narrative of the covenant development process to date including links

The idea for an Anglican covenant came from the Windsor Report (paragraphs 113-120) http://www.aco.org/windsor2004/section_c/p9.cfm. The report which was published in October 2004 after a year's deliberations by the Lambeth Commission on Communion, a group appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury to explore ways the Communion could maintain unity amid differing viewpoints.

The Joint Standing Committee of the Primates and of the Anglican Consultative Council commissioned a study paper on the idea of a covenant in March 2005. It received and endorsed the resulting document, called Towards an Anglican Covenant <http://www.aco.org/commission/covenant/consultation/p7.cfm>, at its meeting in May 2006. The Joint Standing Committee also asked the Archbishop of Canterbury to establish a Covenant Design Group.

In June 2006, the 75th General Convention agreed, via Resolution A166 Anglican Covenant Development Process, http://gc2006.org/legislation/view_leg_detail.aspx?id=207&type=CURRENT, that the Episcopal Church would "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."

The resolution called the Church's support of the process "a demonstration of our commitment to mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Anglican Communion." Resolution 166 also directed Executive Council's International Concerns Standing Committee (INC) to follow the development process and report regularly to Council and the 76th General Convention.

The Covenant Design Group gave a preliminary report, <http://www.aco.org/commission/covenant/report/index.cfm> to the Primates Meeting at Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in February 2007. That report included what is now being called the Nassau Draft, http://www.aco.org/commission/covenant/report/Draft_text.cfm of a covenant.

After reviewing the report at the Dar es Salaam meeting, the Primates endorsed http://www.anglicancommunion.org/communion/primates/resources/downloads/communique2007_english.pdf (paragraphs 15,16) the idea of a covenant and set up a timetable for its adoption by the 38 provinces of the Anglican Communion. They also released the report and the Nassau Draft, asking for comments from each province by the end of 2007.

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The House of Bishops considered the covenant process during its March 2007 meeting. The members heard presentations from Covenant Design Group members the Rev. Dr. A. Katherine Grieb, http://www.episcopalchurch.org/78650_84227_ENG_HTM.htm and the Rev. Dr. Ephraim Radner, http://www.episcopalchurch.org/78650_84225_ENG_HTM.htm .

A work group of the Executive Council's International Concerns Committee prepared a study guide, <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/gc/>, in April 2007 to the Nassau Draft as a way to gather input for the Church's official response.

In June 2007 the House of Bishops Theology Committee issued a study guide, called "Communion Matters," <http://www.collegeforbishops.org/default.aspx?pid=7>, on wider Communion issues.

The Executive Council gave the Episcopal Church's official response, http://www.episcopalchurch.org/78650_91392_ENG_HTM.htm, to the Nassau Draft in October 2007.

The lengthy response notes near its end that "while some of our members consider the draft adequate as it stands, the majority believe that we must work in the hope that the final form of this document will provide a better means of engaging one another respectfully and with mutual regard, as we seek to agree on essential matters of faith and order while celebrating our differences." The response concludes by committing the Episcopal Church "to the effort to perfect this draft so that the resulting Covenant can be a beacon of hope for our common future."

The Covenant Design Group met again at the end of January 2008, and produced a second report and draft -- the St. Andrew's Draft, http://www.aco.org/commission/covenant/docs/st_andrews_documents_2008.pdf , -- taking into account many of the submissions to the group.

In February the INC covenant work group offered a study resource, http://www.episcopalchurch.org/documents/2-14_EC-StudyGuide.pdf, on the second draft.

The House of Bishops Theology Committee met at the HOB March meeting and briefly reviewed the 2nd draft of the covenant. The House of Bishops has not made a formal statement about the covenant.

Links:

Windsor Report paragraphs 113-120:

http://www.aco.org/windsor2004/section_c/p9.cfm

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Study paper on the idea of a covenant: Towards an Anglican Covenant in English and Spanish

<http://www.aco.org/commission/covenant/consultation/p7.cfm>

75th General Convention Resolution A166 Anglican Covenant Development Process

http://gc2006.org/legislation/view_leg_detail.aspx?id=207&type=CURRENT

Primates Meeting endorsement of covenant idea and request for comment on first draft (paragraphs 15,16)

http://www.anglicancommunion.org/communion/primates/resources/downloads/communique2007_english.pdf

First draft: Nassau Draft, http://www.aco.org/commission/covenant/report/Draft_text.cfm

Covenant presentations to the House of Bishops March 2007 meeting

The Rev. Dr. A. Katherine Grieb http://www.episcopalchurch.org/78650_84227_ENG_HTM.htm

The Rev. Dr. Ephraim Radner http://www.episcopalchurch.org/78650_84225_ENG_HTM.htm

Executive Council's study guide for Nassau Draft in English, Spanish and French

<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/gc/>

House of Bishops Theology Committee study guide Communion Matters

<http://www.collegeforbishops.org/default.aspx?pid=7>

Executive Council response to Nassau Draft

http://www.episcopalchurch.org/79901_91392_ENG_HTM.htm

Second draft: St. Andrew's Draft http://www.aco.org/commission/covenant/docs/st_andrews_documents_2008.pdf

Executive Council's study guide for St. Andrew's Draft

http://www.episcopalchurch.org/documents/2-14_EC-StudyGuide.pdf