



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
THE GENERAL CONVENTION

29 June 2009

Dear Bishops and Deputies,

The 14th Meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) in Jamaica in May 2009 considered the Ridley-Cambridge Draft (RCD) of a proposed Anglican Covenant. The ACC by and large accepted the first three sections of the RCD but expressed concerns about Section 4 (see attached resolution). On behalf of the ACC and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Kenneth Kearon, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, in a letter of 28 May 2009 to the Provinces of the Anglican Communion expressed the concerns of the ACC: “that Section 4 of that text had not been subject to the same degree of consultation with the Provinces as the other 3 sections had. Accordingly the ACC requested that the text be referred to the Provinces asking that Section 4 of the text be considered by each Province to identify issues of unclarity or ambiguity in the text” (See attached letter).

A small group, made up of members of the original Covenant Design Group and Staff has been appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury to consider responses from provinces. The Anglican Communion office has requested that all provincial responses be returned by Friday, 13 November 2009.

The 2006 General Convention asked the Executive Council “to follow the development processes of an Anglican Covenant” (GC2006-A166). The Executive Council, through a Task Force (as directed by INC 021, which responds to GC 2006-A166) thus has facilitated The Episcopal Church’s Response to both the Nassau and St. Andrew’s Drafts of the Anglican Covenant.

Now in order for the same Executive Council Task Force to reflect adequately The Episcopal Church’s response to the Ridley Cambridge Draft, we are asking that diocesan deputations to the 2009 General Convention read the whole of the Ridley Cambridge Draft Covenant paying particular attention to Section 4 in the light of the whole. We ask deputations (including their bishop or bishops) to identify “issues of unclarity or ambiguity” in the Ridley Cambridge Draft Section 4 along with other thoughts and reactions to the draft as a whole. Attached are the latest version of the Draft Covenant and a series of questions that hopefully will serve to help make that discussion possible.

We believe that this work will best be accomplished in light of work and resolutions passed at the 2009 General Convention, so we are asking that deputations make their responses following Convention. Please send your responses to the Executive Council Task Force on the Anglican Covenant, The General Convention Office, 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017. The deadline for submissions is **September 1, 2009**. Any responses received after this date cannot be included since the Task Force must prepare a report for the October 2009 Executive Council meeting.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH CENTER

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Thank you for your participation in helping The Episcopal Church to respond to the Ridley Cambridge Draft of the Anglican Covenant.

Faithfully,

The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop

Bonnie Anderson, D.D.
President, House of Deputies

Rosalie Simmonds Ballentine
Chair, ECTFAC

Attachments:

Study Questions

Resolution of ACC-14 on the Anglican Covenant

Letter from the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion.

The Ridley-Cambridge Draft Covenant URL.

SIX STUDY QUESTIONS.

1. The Covenant and seeking “a shared mind.”

Section 3.2.4 of the Ridley Cambridge Draft (RCD) of the Anglican Covenant states “[Each Church... commits itself] to seek a shared mind with other Churches, through the Communion’s councils, about matters of common concern, in a way consistent with the Scriptures, the common standards of faith, and the canon laws of our churches. Each Church will undertake wide consultation with the other Churches of the Anglican Communion and with the Instruments and Commissions of the Communion.

What, in your opinion, is the value of seeking such a “shared mind”? Is an Anglican Covenant helpful in discerning such a shared mind? Are structural and procedural commitments of the RCD, particularly in Section 4, helpful in discerning such a shared mind?

2. Section 4 as a commitment to specific forms of governance.

Does a covenant need a governance section? Should the covenant include an outline for ramifications for not living into the covenant? If so, is section 4 adequate and helpful?

3. The Joint Standing Committee of the Primates Meeting and the Anglican Consultative Council.¹

Is it necessary or useful to give to the Joint Standing Committee the powers it has in Section 4? Or, should each Instrument of Communion (Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Conferences, Primates Meeting, and Anglican Consultative Council) and/or other Anglican Communion body such as Networks and Standing Committees of the Anglican Communion, determine on its own who belongs to it and how churches are included or excluded from its membership?

4. On terms of reference in the RCD, particularly in Section 4.

¹ The JSC is made up of representatives of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates Meeting. Representatives are elected by their respective provinces. The committee, which usually meets annually but has met biannually for the past two years, is the interim body that oversees the day-to-day operations of the Anglican Communion Office and the programs and ministries of the four Instruments of Communion: the Lambeth Conference; the Anglican Consultative Council; the Primates Meeting; and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

**Is it clear as to what "Each Church" and "other Churches" mean in Section 4?
Are there other terms that are unclear or ambiguous, e.g., "relational
consequences" (4.2.3)?**

5. Section 4 on the authority of sections 1-3.

Section 4 (4.1.2) stipulates, "Each Church recognizes in the preceding sections (1-3) a statement of faith, mission and interdependence of life which is consistent with its own life and with the doctrine and practice of the Christian faith as it has received them." Do you agree or not? WHY?

6. Section 4 and the whole of the Draft Covenant.

Having reviewed section 4, how does this influence your overall impressions of *the Ridley Cambridge Draft of the Anglican Covenant*? Do you have other comments on the proposed covenant?

Please return your deputation's observations and comments by September 1, 2009 at the latest to:

Executive Council Task Force on the Anglican Covenant
The General Convention Office
815 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Resolution 14.11: The Anglican Communion Covenant

Resolved, 08.05.09

The Anglican Consultative Council:

1. thanks the Covenant Design Group for their faithfulness and responsiveness in producing the drafts for an Anglican Communion Covenant and, in particular, for the Ridley Cambridge Draft submitted to this meeting;

2. recognises that an Anglican Communion Covenant may provide an effective means to strengthen and promote our common life as a Communion;

3. asks the Archbishop of Canterbury, in consultation with the Secretary General, to appoint a small working group to consider and consult with the Provinces on Section 4 and its possible revision, and to report to the next meeting of the Standing Committee;

4. asks the Standing Committee, at that meeting, to approve a final form of Section 4;

5. asks the Secretary General to send the revised Ridley Cambridge Text, at that time, only to the member Churches of the Anglican Consultative Council for consideration and decision on acceptance or adoption by them as The Anglican Communion Covenant;

6. asks those member Churches to report to ACC-15 on the progress made in the processes of response to, and acceptance or adoption of, the Covenant.



THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

28th May 2009

Dear Primates, Moderators and Provincial Secretaries,

You will already know from your ACC representatives that the text of the Ridley Cambridge Draft of the Covenant was well received at ACC-14 meeting recently in Jamaica though concerns were expressed that Section 4 of that text had not been subject to the same degree of consultation with the Provinces as the other 3 sections had. Accordingly the ACC requested that the text be referred to the Provinces asking that section 4 of the text be considered by each Province to identify issues of unclarity or ambiguity in the text. You will also have received a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury about this.

A small group has now been appointed for this purpose and I enclose a list of their names. They will meet late in November, so I ask that your response be sent to this office at the latest by Friday 13th November 2009. Please send to neil.vigers@anglicancommunion.org.

The revised text will then be brought to the Standing Committee meeting in December, which will then commend the entire text to the Provinces 'for consideration and decision on acceptance or adoption by them'.

I am grateful to you for your commitment to the Covenant process so far, and look forward to receiving your responses to this request in due course.

With all good wishes.

Sincerely.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Kenneth'.

Kenneth Kearon
Secretary General of the Anglican Communion

Enc : The Ridley Cambridge Draft of the Covenant
The members of the Working Group
The Resolution on Covenant from ACC-14

The Ridley Cambridge Draft of the Anglican Covenant can be downloaded from this page:

http://www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/covenant/ridley_cambridge/draft_text.cfm