

Facilitator's Guide for the Diocese of California Discussion of the Proposed Anglican Covenant from the General Convention 2012 Deputation

This discussion is intended to last 1¼ to 1½ hours.

Have an appointed secretary or scribe record feedback from the plenary discussions to be sent along with the small group discussion feedback to the deputation. Facilitators are welcome to use flipcharts or other facilitation aids at their discretion.

Plenary Introduction and Conversation – Framing the Discussion (30 minutes)

Why are we discussing a draft Anglican Covenant?

The California Deputation identified four critical issues not fully addressed by the covenant Study Guide prepared by the D020 taskforce:

1. The decisions of The Episcopal Church and some other provinces (constituent churches) of The Anglican Communion to ordain women and openly gay persons to the diaconate, priesthood, and episcopacy are understood principally as matters of justice rooted in the Gospel. Others in the communion see these decisions in the light of traditional beliefs and scriptural authority. Several of the 38 churches of the Communion have recently broken communion with The Episcopal Church over these differences.
Will the Anglican Covenant restore the Anglican Communion or cause more division?
2. Most of the churches of the Anglican Communion were founded initially through British and later American colonialism and missionary work. The churches founded in colonies later became autonomous as their people became politically independent from colonial powers. For this reason, the Anglican Communion has come to be understood as a body of self-governing churches with a common heritage, rather than a worldwide Church with a central authority.
Will passing a common covenant move Anglicanism from a Communion of churches towards becoming a single, centrally governed, Church?
3. From the Reformation of the 16th century to the present, Christian churches are by their nature either creedal or confessional (covenantal). The former affirm the ancient creeds of the ecumenical councils of the undivided church as the foundation for belief. Confessional churches regard creeds as limited instruments of a corrupt church and have created their own foundational statements of what they believe. Historically, churches of the Anglican Communion have been creedal in their identity.
Will an Anglican Covenant change the fundamental nature of the churches in the Anglican tradition? Is that good or bad?
4. There is no governing structure for what we presently know as The Anglican Communion. Historically, the structures named in the introduction of the Study Guide (pp 3-5) have come into being or created themselves as occasions for conversation during times of crisis since.

What questions or concerns about the Communion or the proposed Covenant do you bring into the conversation today?

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Small group discussion **(30 minutes)**

Divide into small groups of 6-8 people, each with an assigned scribe. Each group discusses the reflection questions on page 6 of the Study Guide, and the scribe will submit the thoughts and questions back to the facilitator at the end of the discussion.

Return to Plenary Discussion and wrap-up **(15 minutes)**

- Concluding Questions for the group-as-a-whole:
 - *What did you notice in your small group discussion? What hopes, further questions, or concerns arose in the conversation?*
 - *Do we need an Anglican Covenant to sustain the life of the Anglican Communion?*

- Wrap-up – where the discussion goes from here:
 - Submission of feedback to the General Convention Deputation
 - Submission to Executive Council of The Episcopal Church
 - Decisions ahead in 2012
 - Contacts if they have further questions or comment on the proposed Anglican Covenant

Please return all written feedback from the discussion to Dr. Roderick Dugliss

ATTN: Covenant Discussion

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-or-

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Feedback needs to be returned no later than April 1st, 2011.

Questions? Call or email The Rev. Richard E. Helmer, Secretary for the General Convention 2012 Deputation at (415) 388-1907 or rector@oursaviourmv.org