

Title: Relation to the Anglican Communion

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 77th General Convention give thanks to all who have worked to increase understanding and strengthen relationships among the churches of the Anglican Communion, and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention reaffirm the commitment of this church to the fellowship of autonomous national and regional churches that is the Anglican Communion; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention believe that sister churches of the Anglican Communion are properly drawn together by bonds of affection, by participation in the common mission of the gospel, and by consultation without coercion or intimidation; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention, having prayerfully considered the merits of the Anglican Communion Covenant and believing said agreement to be contrary to Anglican ecclesiology and tradition and to the best interests of the Anglican Communion, respectfully decline to adopt the same; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention call upon the leaders of The Episcopal Church at every level to seek opportunities to reach out to strengthen and restore relationships between this church and sister churches of the Communion.

Explanation: Churches of the Anglican Communion have been asked to adopt the so-called Anglican Communion Covenant. The suggestion for such an agreement was made in the 2004 Windsor Report, which proposed “the adoption by the churches of the Communion of a common Anglican Covenant which would make explicit and forceful the loyalty and bonds of affection which govern the relationships between the churches of the Communion.”

The Windsor Report was produced at the request of Primates upset with the impending consecration of Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire and the promulgation of a liturgy for the blessing of same-sex unions by the Diocese of New Westminster in the Anglican Church of Canada.

Archbishop Drexel Gomez, of the Anglican Province of the West Indies, was entrusted with leading the development of the first draft of a covenant. This same Archbishop Gomez was one of the editors of *To Mend the Net*, a collection of essays dating from 2001 and advocating enhancing the power of the Anglican Primates to deter, *inter alia*, the ordination

of women and “active homosexuals,” as well as the blessing of same-sex unions. Archbishop Gomez’s punitive agenda remains evident in the final draft of the proposed Covenant.

Despite protestations to the contrary, the Anglican Communion Covenant attempts to create a centralized authority that would constrain the self-governance of The Episcopal Church and other churches of the Communion. This unacceptably inhibits Communion churches from pursuing the gospel mission as they discern it.

The Church of England has already declined to adopt the Anglican Communion Covenant. The House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines has indicated that they will not support the Covenant, and the rejection of the Covenant by the Tikanga Maori of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia renders it virtually certain that those churches will also reject the Covenant. A number of Global South churches have indicated that they will decline to adopt the Covenant.

The deficiencies of the Covenant are legion, and the Anglican Communion faces the prospect of becoming a fellowship not united but divided by the Covenant. It is essential to reject the Anglican Communion Covenant in order to avoid the Communion’s permanent, institutionalized division.