

The Episcopal Diocese of Quincy Anglican Covenant Responses

We, the deputies of the Episcopal Diocese of Quincy, each having read the proposed Anglican Communion Covenant thoroughly and prayerfully and various documents in favor and not in favor of adopting the covenant, report our unanimous response (with one lay deputy absent due to serious illness):

- 1) We have grave reservations about the “instruments of the Communion,” the authority bestowed by the proposed covenant and the hierarchy it creates. The only hierarchy of the Communion has been a spiritual one, bonding all Anglicans to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Lambeth Conference is an important gathering of the Communion’s bishops, each now by invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. It may issue recommendations or spiritual advice to the Communion, but has no binding authority.

The Anglican Consultative Council, created by the Lambeth Conference in 1968, is not widely recognized as an authoritative body in the Communion, nor does it appear to be clearly known to the average Anglican.

The Primates’ Meeting seems to have taken on a life of its own and again is not widely understood or seen as a source of authority.

While the present wording of the Covenant does not clearly establish these bodies as an authoritative hierarchy, it is a move in that direction.

We only recognize the Archbishop of Canterbury as our spiritual head, and no other earthly international authority. We see no reason to change this.

- 2) Despite protests to the contrary, it is clear that section 4 is punitive. It is a break with the history of the Communion, which has been a warm fellowship of churches in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury and who share common sources of worship and tradition.
- 3) The need or desirability of a Covenant, with or without section 4, seems to us counterproductive, sewing seeds of conflict and endangering the great productivity with which God has blessed our Communion.
- 4) While manifold blessings are being given us as our global community draws closer together, we must recognize that the world in which we live is still very diverse. The customs, circumstances, growth and spiritual needs of people throughout our world share much in common and yet remain quite divergent as our histories, traditions and social interactions are not always the same. We recognize that the continents and countries of our world each have unusual, sometimes unique, needs to which God, through His Church, will respond in varying ways. We can only respect these needs and differences and recognize God’s grace showered on us all.

- 5) All of our deputies feels the language of the proposed Covenant is too vague, unclear and not concise. Specifically it was called “gobbledygook.” The average church person probably will have little idea what the covenant really says or means, if she or he can be induced somehow to read it. We doubt few have any real interest in a covenant.
- 6) We feel rather than binding the Communion together in closer fellowship, the proposed covenant, with or without Section 4, is an invitation to conflict and will lead to further stress and distrust that will endanger our future together.
- 7) We shall attend General Convention determined to listen carefully and be open to the Spirit. However, with the knowledge and urging of that Holy Spirit we have received up to this point, we shall will vote against adopting the Covenant.

Submitted by:

The lay and clergy deputies to the 2012 General Convention from the Episcopal Diocese of Quincy, 24 April 2011.

The Rev. Robert L’Homme
The Rev. James Clement
The Rev. Margaret Lee
The Rev. Canon Thomas Stone

Mrs. Tobyn Leigh, Chair
Ms. Anne Fulton
Ms. Beverly Everett
Dr. Lin Goldstone