

An Anglican Covenant - St Andrew's Communique

The Covenant Design Group (CDG) held its second meeting at the Anglican Communion Offices, St. Andrew's House, London, UK, between Monday, 28th January, and Saturday, 2nd February, 2008, under the chairmanship of the Most Revd Drexel Gomez, Archbishop of the West Indies.

The main task of the group was to develop a second draft for the Anglican Covenant, as originally proposed in the Windsor Report 2004; an idea adopted by the Primates' Meeting and the Joint Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates in their following meetings. At their meeting in January 2007, the CDG produced a first draft – the Nassau Draft - for such a covenant, which was received at the meeting of the Primates and the Joint Standing Committee in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in February of that year. This draft was subsequently sent to the Provinces, Churches and Commissions of the Anglican Communion for consultation, reflection and response.

At this meeting, the CDG reviewed the comments and submissions received and developed the new draft, which is now published. In addition to thirteen provincial responses, a large number of responses were received from commissions, organisations, dioceses and individuals from across the Communion. It is intended that these responses will be published in the near future on the Anglican Communion website. The CDG is grateful to all those who contributed their reflections for this meeting, and trust that they will find their contributions honoured in the revised text prepared.

The current draft – known as the St Andrew's Draft – will now be offered for reflection in the Communion at large, and in particular by the Lambeth Conference, which has been convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury to meet in his see City of Canterbury, England, between 16th July and 3rd August of this year. The CDG hopes that bishops will study the present draft in their preparations for the Conference, consulting in their dioceses and sharing their reflections at the Conference.

The draft is accompanied by a number of supporting documents, including a brief commentary which outlines the thinking of the CDG on some of the issues considered, and which also gives responses to some of the specific suggestions and criticisms made to them. It also includes a tentative draft of a procedural appendix, the status of which is set out in the commentary.

Following the Lambeth Conference, the CDG will meet to review the progress on the development of the Covenant project within the Communion, and will submit a Covenant draft to the Provinces and ecumenical partners of the Communion for formal comment and response. It is the intention to produce definitive proposals for adoption in the Communion following that further round of consultation. Proposals for the process of consultation on, and reception of, the Covenant and its ultimate consideration by synodical process will be presented to the Joint Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates at their meeting in March 2008.

The CDG is grateful to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who received the CDG at Lambeth Palace on Tuesday, 29th January, and to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey, who welcomed the group to Evensong later that day. The Secretary General of the Anglican Communion hosted a dinner for the group on the Thursday.

Because they have been unable to attend the meetings of the CDG, Ms Nomfundo Walaza of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa and Ms Sriyangani Fernando of the Church of Ceylon have graciously resigned their membership of the CDG. The Archbishop of Canterbury has nominated Mrs Rubie Nottage (Church in the Province of the West Indies) to membership of the group. He further nominated Dr Eileen Scully (Anglican Church of Canada) to be a member of the group for the London meeting, and Professor Norman Doe (Church in Wales) as a consultant for that meeting.

The members present in the meeting in London were:

The Most Revd Drexel Gomez, Primate of the West Indies, Chair
The Revd Dr Victor Atta-Baffoe, Anglican Church of West Africa
The Most Revd Dr John Chew, Primate of South East Asia
The Revd Dr A Katherine Grieb, The Episcopal Church (USA)
The Rt Revd Santosh Marray, Bishop of the Seychelles
The Most Revd Dr John Neill, Archbishop of Dublin
Chancellor Rubie Nottage, Church in the Province of the West Indies
Dr J Eileen Scully, Anglican Church of Canada
The Revd Dr Ephraim Radner, The Episcopal Church (USA)

The Revd Canon Gregory Cameron, Anglican Communion Office, Secretary
Professor Norman Doe, Cardiff University, Consultant
The Revd Canon Andrew Norman, Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative

The Covenant Design Group will meet again later this year after the Lambeth Conference.