

The Proposed Anglican Covenant: 1. Background and Timeline

The purpose of this session is to examine the process that has led to the development of the proposed Anglican covenant, to identify resources that are available to aid in the study of the covenant, and to identify initial questions we may have about the covenant process.

- Resources: information about the covenant process
 - The Anglican Covenant: <anglicancommunion.org/commission/covenant/index.cfm>
 - The Windsor Process: <anglicancommunion.org/commission/process/index.cfm>
 - TEC resources: <www.episcopalchurch.org/79425_124323_ENG_HTM.htm>
- Timeline of significant events leading to the proposed Anglican covenant
 - 1988 - Following proposals by TEC to consecrate women to the episcopate, the 12th Lambeth Conference invites reflection on the nature of communion and its actualization in the Anglican tradition, and organizes the “Eames Commission” to pursue this task
 - 1994 - The Eames Commission first publishes the results of its work on communion, and identifies four instruments of communion as characteristic of Anglicanism (Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Conference, Anglican Consultative Council, Primate’s Meeting)
 - 1998 - 13th Lambeth Conference receives “The Virginia Report”
 - 2001 - The idea of a covenant is discussed at a Primate’s Meeting, but no action is taken
 - 2003 - 74th General Convention of TEC consents to the election of the Rt. Rev. V. Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire
 - Lambeth Commission on Communion established following special Primate’s Meeting to provide “urgent and deep theological and legal reflection” on the nature of communion
 - 2004 - The Windsor Report is released
 - 2005 - Primate’s Meeting at Dromantine initiates the “Listening Process”
 - Joint Standing Committee of the Primates and the Anglican Consultative Council commission a study on the possibility of an Anglican covenant
 - 2006 - Covenant Design Group formed by the Archbishop of Canterbury
 - 75th General Convention of TEC affirms in principle the idea of an Anglican Covenant and commits to monitoring and responding to drafts of the covenant
 - 2007 - “Nassau Draft” of the proposed covenant released at Primate’s Meeting in Dar es Salaam

- TEC Executive Council International Concerns Committee appoints a task force to receive responses to the “Nassau Draft” from members of TEC
- 2008 - “St. Andrew’s Draft” of the proposed covenant released at 13th Lambeth Conference
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- 2009 - “Ridley-Cambridge Draft” of the proposed covenant released at 14th meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council
 - 76th General Convention of TEC encourages deputations to respond to the “Ridley-Cambridge Draft” and resolves to recommend the draft to TEC for consideration in anticipation of the 77th General Convention
 - Working group established by the Archbishop of Canterbury receives and incorporates suggestions into final draft of the proposed covenant
 - Dec: final draft of the proposed covenant released
- 2010 - June: covenant study guide released by D020 Task Force
 - October: TEC General Convention deputations reminded to reflect on the proposed covenant
- 2011 - April: TEC General Convention deputations submit responses to D020 Task Force
 - June: D020 Task Force submits initial recommendations to TEC Executive Council
 - October: D020 Task Force submits final recommendations to TEC Executive Council
 - December: TEC Executive Council submits report for publication in the Blue Book (in anticipation of 77th General Convention in 2012)
- Questions for Discussion
 - The covenant design process has been organized around questions that pertain to the unity of the church and the communion of its members. How do you understand the unity of the church, and what significance does church unity have in your life of faith and in the experience of your faith community?
 - What is your understanding of the way that Anglican Christianity in particular bears witness to the unity of the church and communion of its members? Does Anglicanism, in other words, offer a unique perspective on church unity and/or resources for engaging this question?
 - How have you been made aware of the on-going discussions about the possibility of enacting an Anglican covenant, and what do you see as the potential opportunities and challenges to have emerged from these discussions?