

April 24, 2011

To: Executive Council Task Force on the Anglican Covenant

From: Diocese of Kansas General Convention deputation

The deputies to the 2012 General Convention from the Diocese of Kansas met to discuss the proposed Anglican Covenant. Consistent with the principles set out in resolution D025 of the Episcopal Church General Convention in 2009, we reaffirm the abiding commitment of the Episcopal Church to live in fellowship with the churches that constitute the Anglican Communion and we seek to live into the highest degree of communion possible. We desire to have the Episcopal Church participate to the fullest extent possible in the many instruments, networks and relationships of the Anglican Communion.

With this in mind, we gave prayerful consideration to the proposed Covenant. There were no major issues raised by members of the deputation regarding the first three sections of the proposed covenant.

However, the deputation does not support Section Four of the covenant, which for the first time in the history of the Anglican Communion, imposes penalties or “relational consequences” against Churches in the Communion should they refuse to “defer a controversial action” deemed to be “incompatible with the Covenant.” Imposing penalties for actions or decisions deemed incompatible with the Covenant is inconsistent with our traditional understanding of covenants, as reflected in the marriage covenant or the baptismal covenant. These covenants do not include penalties or “relational consequences.” The deputation believes that the inclusion of such penalties would be antithetical to any covenantal relationship. The inclusion of penalties is consistent with a contractual or legal relationship in the secular world, not a covenantal relationship.

The Anglican Communion has grown and thrived without any need for a centralized authority or the imposition of penalties for controversial actions or decisions. The members of the Anglican Communion are our brothers and sisters in Christ, and our unity should not be imperiled because of a lack of uniformity in practices or beliefs. In the 1860s, the Episcopal Church refused to split despite strong disagreement about slavery which led to a bloody Civil War. By remaining one body during this very difficult time, we emerged a stronger, healthier, and more faithful church. As Bishop Alexander stated in his book *This Far by Grace*, living together in tension and disagreement is always preferable to schism. Furthermore, the areas of agreement that bind us together in the Anglican Communion far exceed those areas in which we are not of one mind.

We look forward to continuing to walk together with all our brothers and sisters in the Anglican Communion and give thanks for our fellowship.

General Convention Deputation of the Diocese of Kansas

Lay deputies: Mr. Larry Bingham
Mr. Mike Morrow (chair)
Mr. Robert Skaggs
Ms. Natalie Vanatta

Lay alternates: Mr. Steven King
Ms. Teresa Rogers
Ms. Harriet Duff
Mr. Joe Mitchell

Clergy deputies: The Rev. Canon Craig Loya
The Rev. Julianne Sifers
Deacon Steve Segebrecht
The Rev. Betty Glover

Clergy alternates: The Rev. Gail Greenwell