

GENERAL SYNOD

**DRAFT ANGLICAN COVENANT:
NOTE FROM THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS**

1. Members of General Synod will recall that in July 2007 it heard an address from the Most Revd Drexel Gomez (Chair of the Covenant Design Group) prior to a debate about the principle of the Anglican Covenant. The following motion was carried:

That this Synod:

- (a) affirm its willingness to engage positively with the unanimous recommendation of the Primates in February 2007 for a process designed to produce a covenant for the Anglican Communion;
- (b) note that such a process will only be concluded when any definitive text has been duly considered through the synodical processes of the provinces of the Communion; and
- (c) invite the Presidents, having consulted the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council, to agree the terms of a considered response to the draft from the Covenant Design Group for submission to the Anglican Communion Office by the end of the year.'

The debate was resourced by *The Anglican Covenant: Resources for Debate* [GS 1661], the Archbishops' foreword to which is reproduced for ease of reference as ANNEX 1.

2. The House of Bishops, assisted by its Theological Group and the Faith & Order Advisory Group, considered a draft response to the Draft Anglican Covenant at its meeting in October 2007. The response was also considered by the Archbishops' Council at its November 2007 meeting. A response reflecting both these discussions was subsequently agreed by the Archbishops and submitted to the Covenant Design Group prior to its deadline for responses of the end of the year. This version was posted on the CofE website on 2 January.
3. The response is now attached as ANNEX 2. It is in two parts. The first part is a detailed commentary on the draft text from the Covenant Design Group¹ with their text in Times New Roman and the commentary on each section then following in Arial. The second part is a proposed revision of the draft text in the light of the suggestions made in the commentary.

¹ See Annex 5 of GS 1661.

4. A commitment was given at the General Synod in July to creating scope for a 'conversation' at the February Synod about the Church of England's response which would by then have been submitted. The Archbishops' Council considered this at its November meeting and proposed there be a 'take note' debate at the February Synod. This was agreed by the Business Committee at its meeting in December.
5. In terms of the process thereafter in the Anglican Communion, Canon Gregory Cameron (Secretary to the Covenant Design Group) has confirmed that this is as follows:
 - “(a) to receive such comments on draft version 1[as circulated to the July 2007 Synod] as submitted to inform redrafting to be done at a meeting of the CDG at the end of January 2008.
 - (b) to submit revised draft (version 2 – ie following the January 2008 CDG meeting) to Lambeth for bishops to add commentary. We don't want the bishops to vote a text - or any part of it - up or down, but to make their views clear on the development of the text, and to catalyse the discussion at Provincial level, informing the development of the third draft, so the next phase is
 - (c) to send version 2 and Lambeth commentary to Provinces for consultation and ask for formal submissions on draft in light of commentary
 - (d) to prepare third draft (version 3) for submission to ACC-14 in 2009.”
6. The process thereafter would depend on decisions taken by the ACC. The time table set out by Canon Cameron means that there will be further opportunity for provincial comments – including some discussion in General Synod - in the period between Lambeth 2008 and leading into ACC-14 in 2009.

(On behalf of the House)

+ROWAN CANTUAR:

+SENTAMU EBOR:

14 January 2008