

## **A Report of the meeting of the Bishops of Albany, Dallas, North Dakota, Northern Indiana, South Carolina, West Texas and Western Louisiana with the Archbishop of Canterbury on September 1, 2009:**

As seven representatives of the Communion Partner bishops, we are grateful to have met with the Archbishop of Canterbury to discuss our concern in light of the recent actions of General Convention and the subsequent episcopal nominations of candidates “whose manner of life presents a challenge to the wider church and will lead to further strains on communion” (General Convention 2006, Resolution B033).

At this meeting we expressed our appreciation for his post-Convention reflections, “Communion, Covenant, and Our Anglican Future,” and were especially interested in his statement about whether “elements” in provinces not favorably disposed to adopt the Anglican Communion Covenant “will be free ... to adopt the Covenant as a sign of their wish to act in a certain level of mutuality with parts of the Communion.”

Given our commitment to remain constituent members of both the Anglican Communion and The Episcopal Church, we are encouraged by our meeting with the Archbishop. We agree with him that our present situation is “an opportunity for clarity, renewal and deeper relation with one another – and so also with Our Lord and his Father, in the power of the Spirit.” We, too, desire to “intensify existing relationships” by becoming part of a “Covenanted” global Anglican body in communion with the See of Canterbury. We also pray and hope that “in spite of the difficulties, this may yet be the beginning of a new era of mission and spiritual growth for all who value the Anglican name and heritage.”

We understand the divisions before us, not simply as differences of opinion on matters of human sexuality, but also about differing understandings of ecclesiology and questions regarding the independence or interdependence of a global communion of churches in discerning the mind of Christ together. However, we also shared our concern that the actions of the General Convention have essentially rejected the teaching of 1998 Lambeth Resolution 1.10 as the mind of the Communion, and raise a serious question whether a Covenant will be adopted by both Houses at General Convention 2012.

At the same time we are mindful that General Convention 2009 Resolution D020 commended “the Anglican Covenant proposed in the most recent text of the Covenant Design Group (the ‘Ridley Cambridge Draft’) and any successive drafts to the dioceses for study and comment during the coming triennium” and invited dioceses and congregations to “consider the Anglican Covenant proposed draft as a document to inform their understanding of and commitment to our common life in the Anglican Communion.”

Therefore, at this time we make the following requests of Communion-minded members of The Episcopal Church and the wider Anglican Communion:

1. We encourage dioceses, congregations and individuals of The Episcopal Church to pray and work for the adoption of an Anglican Communion Covenant.

2. We encourage dioceses and congregations to study and endorse the Anglican Communion Covenant when it is finally released and to urge its adoption by General Convention, or to endorse the first three sections of the Ridley Cambridge Draft and the Anaheim Statement, and to record such endorsements on the Communion Partners website ([www.comunionpartners.org](http://www.comunionpartners.org)).
3. We encourage bishops, priests, deacons and laypersons of The Episcopal Church who support the adoption of the Anglican Communion Covenant to record such endorsements on the Communion Partners website.
4. We encourage dioceses and congregations, in the spirit of GC09 Resolution B030, to engage in “companion domestic mission relationships among dioceses and congregations within The Episcopal Church.”
5. We encourage bishops exercising jurisdiction in The Episcopal Church to call upon us for service in needed cases of Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight.
6. We encourage relationships between Communion Partners and primates, bishops, provinces and dioceses in other parts of the Communion, in order to enhance the ministry we share in the life of the Communion.
7. We invite primates and bishops of the Communion to offer their public support to these efforts.

+Mark J. Lawrence, South Carolina  
+Gary R. Lillibridge, West Texas  
+Edward S. Little II, Northern Indiana  
+William H. Love, Albany  
+D. Bruce MacPherson Western Louisiana  
+Michael G. Smith, North Dakota  
+James M. Stanton, Dallas