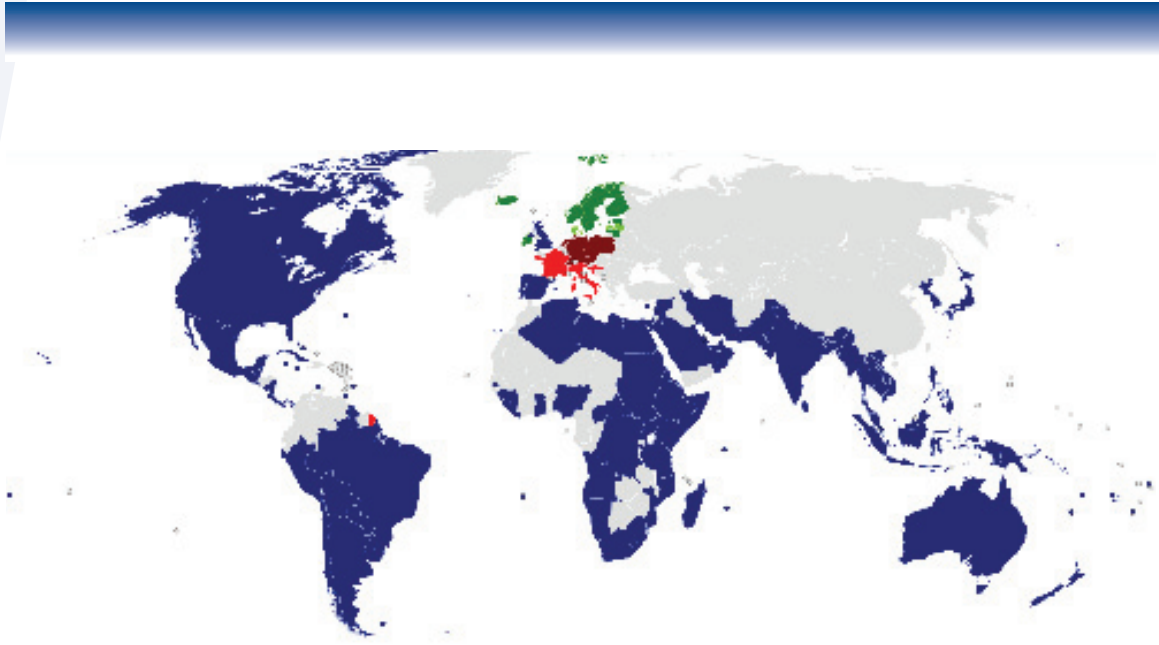


The Anglican Covenant

A PARISH STUDY GUIDE



The Anglican Communion

Parish Study Guide:

This study guide is provided to congregations in the Episcopal Diocese of Texas and is designed for four-45 minute sessions. It is intended as an overview of the Anglican Communion Covenant set in the context of our story as the people of God.

Needed for each session:

- *Bibles or copies of the Bible passages noted in the study guide*
- *Copies of the Anglican Covenant available at www.anglicancommunion.org*
- *Handouts for the session*

Anglican Covenant Allows Input at Historical Moment in Church History

By Bishop Andy Doyle

Leaders throughout the Church have asked us to study the proposed Anglican Covenant. This document, calling us to strengthen our ties to other provinces of the Anglican Communion is no less controversial today than was the Chicago Lambeth Quadrilateral was in 1886. The Quadrilateral birthed an evolving movement of church unity that intrigues and challenges us even now.

Today, there are differing views about the proposed Anglican Covenant. Our collection of 38 Anglican Primates (a primate is an appointed leader of a province) seem divided over it. However, one thing is certain, all have agreed that we, as a community, are called to discern through prayer and discussion our place in the wider Anglican Communion and to share with one another our thoughts on the Covenant, a document that proposes to bind us closer together.

The Archbishop and the Global Anglican Communion

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams said that the Covenant has “to do with becoming the Church God wants us to be, for the better proclamation of the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ.” He said it would be a mistake to see our disagreements as “no more than an unhappy set of tensions within a global family” and believes the Covenant is an “opportunity for clarity, renewal and deeper relation with one another.”

“To recognize different futures for different groups must involve mutual respect for deeply held theological convictions,” he said, noting the diverse convictions that have existed within the Anglican Communion throughout its history, adding, “We must 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.)

The Anglican Consultative Council

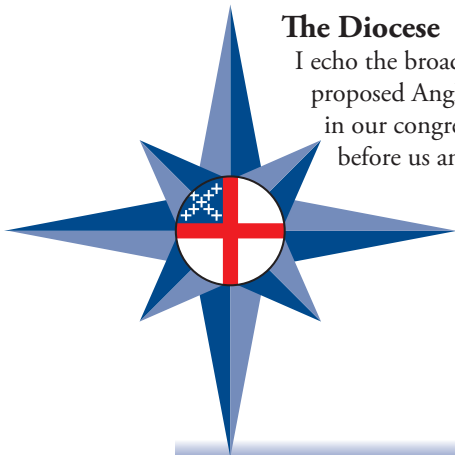
The Anglican Consultative Council (one of the four instruments of communion in the Anglican Communion), highlighted the unifying nature of the Covenant. In the preamble they drafted, they point out that the document is not meant to change “the character of this Anglican expression of Christian faith,” but they recognize renewing our commitment to one another in a solemn way, reaffirming and strengthening the “bonds of affection” which hold the Anglican Communion together.

The Episcopal Church

Leaders in the Episcopal Church, including Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, and Bonnie Anderson, president of the House of Deputies, have urged every congregation to discuss the Covenant and share their feelings about it in order that the next General Convention may “reflect the mind of the whole Church.”

The Diocese

I echo the broad church in calling the people of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas to reflect on the proposed Anglican Covenant. That is why I gathered a task force to write a curriculum for use in our congregations this Lent. My hope is that you will examine carefully the opportunity before us and share your thoughts respectfully with others in your congregation and that you will send your comments to the General Convention office before April 24 in order for your voice to be heard.



+ C. Andrew Doyle

Bishop of Texas

Session I: Covenants in the Bible and in the Communion

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, you called the family of Israel to show the world your light. Through the work of Jesus Christ, you called the Church to show the world your face. By the power of your Holy Spirit, bend us to the work of communion. Unite our Anglican family under the banner of your Son. Help us show the world your oneness. AMEN

Introduction:

None of us are islands. We live interconnected lives in a web of communities. Nowhere is this more important than in the Church. Community is one of the most recurrent themes across the Old and New Testaments. Jews and Christians have always been exceedingly careful about how we live with one another, believing that the character of our communities should show the world something true about God. This is why covenants exist. Covenants remind us that we are not just another group of humans meeting for common purpose. We are the chosen people of God, who have agreed to show the world who God is by treating each other in specific ways. Covenants were an important tool for maintaining cohesion in the communities that generated the Old and New Testaments. Likewise, the Anglican Covenant is not the first covenant-like document to see the light of day among the members of our own global community of Christians, the Anglican Communion.

Part 1: Bible Study on Deuteronomy 30: 11-20

The Biblical Context: Our first Bible study takes us to the ancient borders of what would become the land of Israel. Moses and the people stand just outside the Promised Land preparing to enter. At this critical juncture God renews His covenant with them and through the words of Moses calls for the people's response.

Divide into small groups to read and discuss the Bible passage.

Choose a recorder to keep notes from your discussion to report to the rest of the group.

Deuteronomy 30: 11-20.

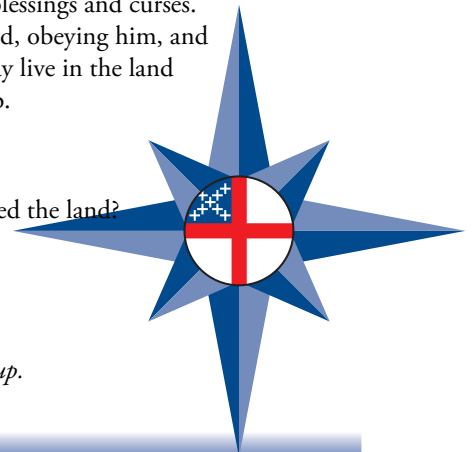
Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?' No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.

See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Discussion Questions:

- Why was it important that the covenant be renewed before the people entered the land?
- What was changing?
- What were God's promises to the people of Israel?
- Why was a response needed?

After 15 minutes, call the group back and have the recorder share with the larger group.



Part 2: The Anglican Communion Context: Americans, Covenants, and the Anglican Communion

The following is adapted from a presentation given by the Rev. Dr. Robert W. Prichard to the clergy of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas at the annual Clergy Conference in October, 2010.

Over the past three hundred years, there have been a variety of Covenant-like documents which have bound together the Churches of the Anglican Communion. In one way or another, American Episcopalians are responsible for most of them. From the very beginning of the Episcopal Church, Episcopalians have tirelessly advocated for formal structures and agreements that unite Anglicans around the world.

Even in the earliest days of American Anglicanism, among the correspondence between the earliest founders of the Episcopal Church in the late 18th century, there is a clear sense that an independent nation DID NOT mean an independent Church. Episcopalians felt deeply connected to the Church of England, in spite of the brutal revolution which had just been fought to secure the political independence of the British colonies in America. William White, the Bishop of Pennsylvania and the man largely responsible for the infrastructure of the Episcopal Church, wrote the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York, looking back on the time when American congregations served under the Bishop of London. He emphasized the strong bonds between the Church of England and the Episcopal Church. He writes, “The Bishops of London were our Diocesans and the uninterrupted though voluntary submission of our congregations will remain a perpetual proof of their mild and paternal government.”

During the 19th century, this strong affection for the Church of England developed into an even stronger longing among Episcopalians for an international structure that would formalize the relationship between Anglican Churches in various parts of the world. The religious landscape in 19th century America was changing, and Episcopalians were anxious about their status. The Methodists and the Roman Catholics were ascendant denominations, and their strength made Episcopalians nervous. In response to the sense that the Episcopal Church was “losing the battle,” for their fellow Americans, Episcopalians began looking for a unique identity, something which they could champion and which would set them apart from the other Christian churches that were thriving on the American continent. What they settled upon was their Anglicanism. In order to differentiate itself from other denominations at home, the Episcopal Church began to make public calls abroad for a formalized structure that would bring Anglicans around the world together.

During this time, the American Church successfully negotiated a variety of covenant-like instruments to create visible unity among Anglican churches. The Americans signed a concordat with the Church of Scotland and the Church of England, neither of whom were on speaking terms with each other. This agreement between three Anglican Churches could be regarded as the very beginning of the Anglican Communion. In 1859, the House of Bishops wrote the Archbishop of Canterbury, asking for a meeting among all Anglican bishops. This letter was a precipitating factor for the first Lambeth Conference, the global meeting of Anglican bishops that occurs every ten years. The first Lambeth Conference held in 1867, adopted the language of “Communion” pioneered by Episcopalians in the 1850s, and this new language appears in the resolutions passed by the group of 70 or so bishops. In 1888, the first doctrinal statement for the Anglican Communion, arguably a forerunner to the Anglican Covenant currently under debate, was brought before the Lambeth Conference. This document, the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, was conceived of first by an American priest, William Reed Huntington, and was adopted first by the House of Bishops meeting in Chicago in 1886. During the 19th century the Anglican Communion was being born, largely because of 80 years of tireless campaigning by members of the Episcopal Church.



Since the birth of the Anglican Communion in the nineteenth century, Episcopalians have been intimately involved with its growth on all fronts. In the 1950's, 1 out of every 4 graduates of the Virginia Theological Seminary left the United States to serve in parishes overseas. In 1967, the Episcopal Church

changed the preamble of its Constitutions and Canons, identifying itself for the first time as “a constituent member of the Anglican Communion.” Both the 1st and 3rd Executive Officers of the Anglican Communion were Episcopalians. Today, Episcopalians enjoy three votes on the Anglican Consultative Council, one of the four Instruments of the Anglican Communion. For the past three hundred years, Episcopalians have been writing documents, organizing meetings, building consensus and passing votes intended to bring Anglicans around the world closer together because they believed that belonging to a global family of Anglican churches is an essential piece of Episcopal identity. In this context, Episcopalians can look at the Anglican Communion Covenant with a measure of pride, for without the hard work and sacrifice of Episcopalians past there would be no Anglican Communion at all.

Divide into small groups and discuss.

Choose a recorder to keep notes from your discussion to report to the rest of the group.

Discussion Questions

- How has the context of the Anglican Communion changed over the last century?
- How could a Covenant between the churches of the Anglican Communion address these changes?
- How have you experienced God’s faithfulness in the Episcopal Church?
- How can our parish prepare to respond?

After 15 minutes, call the group back and have the recorder share with the larger group.

Hand out copies of the Anglican Communion Covenant for participants to read before the next session.

Closing Prayer

“Almighty God, you sent your Son Jesus Christ to reconcile the world to yourself: We praise and bless you for those whom you have sent in the power of the Spirit to preach the Gospel to all nations. We thank you that in all parts of the earth a community of love has been gathered together by their prayers and labors, and that in every place your servants call upon your Name; for the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours for ever. AMEN” *The Book of Common Prayer, 1979*



Session II: New Humanity in Revelation, the Changing Humanity in Today's World

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, in scripture you have promised us a renewed heaven, renewed earth, and a renewed humanity. Help us follow the example of your Son Jesus Christ, in laying down our own lives for our enemies. Through our submission and sacrifice, build your new humanity. We ask this by the power of your Holy Spirit. AMEN

Introduction

When we last met, we looked at the biblical roots for the idea of covenants – holy agreements between men and women and between human beings and God, which are based on faithfulness and sacrifice. We explored how these covenants were meant as witnesses to the world – showing people the character of God. We also examined the untold history of the Episcopal Church's pivotal role in the formation of the Anglican Communion, and we explored how the Anglican Communion Covenant might represent a next step in our history of leadership among global Anglicans.

Today we start with the Book of Revelation, and examine what the biblical texts say to us about the new humanity God is creating on earth. We wrestle with the Church's call to be this new, unified humanity, witnessing amongst the old, broken, fragmented humanity. We also examine the Anglican Communion Covenant from another angle – looking at the changing humanity across the globe in the 21st century. We use these demographic shifts to explain the current conflict in the Anglican Communion, and we suggest that the Anglican Covenant might mark a way forward for a Communion striving to be the New Humanity in a world that is languishing across the Global North/Global South divide.

Part 1: Bible Study on the Book of Revelation 21:1-4

The Biblical Context: Late in the first century John of Patmos shares his vision to encourage churches enduring persecution. Using imagination and metaphor, John pictures a new material world full of the glory of God, where love is common, hate unknown, and people live as one, under the kind rule of Jesus Christ.

Divide into small groups to read and discuss the Bible passage.

Choose a recorder to keep notes from your discussion to report to the rest of the group.

Revelation 21: 1-4

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.'

Discussion Questions:

- How is covenant fulfilled in this passage? How do you understand, "they will be his peoples?"
- Is unity amongst humankind restored in this passage?
 - What are the first things that must pass away?
 - The scriptures call upon the Church to BE this new creation. How can the Episcopal Church embody this call, to be the new, united family of God in our world today?
 - Is the Anglican Communion Covenant a possible way for the Anglican Communion to fulfill the call to be the new humanity?

After 15 minutes call the group back and have the recorder share with the larger group.



Part 2: The Anglican Communion Context: Changing Humanity and the Anglican Covenant

The following includes statistics adapted from The Next Christendom, a book by Dr. Phillip Jenkins and published by Oxford University Press

The reality is difficult for Global northerners to understand: The Global North is on the decline, and the Global South is ascendant. Ultimately, these historic transitions across the face of the planet have more to do with population levels than with anything else. Citizens of the Global North have confidence in the availability of effective medicine, which means that birth rates are lower in the Global North than in the Global South. Social welfare structures function with relative efficiency, meaning that families have fewer children. Men and women both work in the sophisticated economies of the Global North, meaning that child-rearing is less of a priority. To maintain a stable society, the birthrate for a country must remain at or above 2.1 children per household. All European nations have birthrates far lower than that, and even Russia is projected to experience a population drop from 145.6 million people to 121 million by 2050.

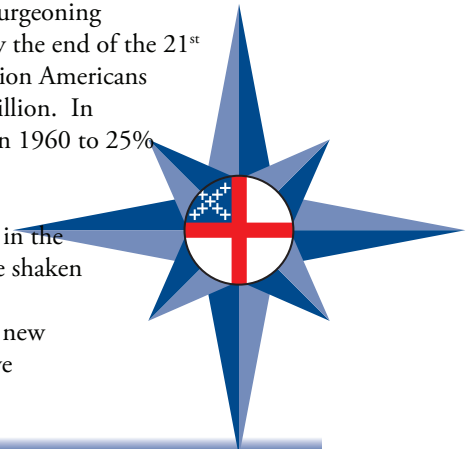
In contrast, the US Census Bureau predicts that several countries will double their populations over the next 25 years, including Uganda, Madagascar, the Congo, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Cambodia, and most of that population growth is happening in cities. If current projections hold true, by 2025, 60% of the world's population will live in urban environments, in cities like Cairo, Mumbai, Dhaka, Karachi, Jakarta, Lagos, and Mexico City. These urban environments will be home to 30 or 40 million people each, with almost no social infrastructure at all to speak of. Phillip Jenkins writes that, "Tens of millions of new urban dwellers will in effect be living and working totally outside the legal economy or any effective relationship with officialdom." In five years, the only city in the "first" world projected to still retain a place on the list of the world's largest, is Tokyo.

As the Global North has declined, so has its religiosity. In Great Britain, home to the Church of England, statistics are sobering. In the year 2000, 44% of people classified themselves as unreligious, which is up from 31% in 1983. Two thirds of the population aged 18-24 described themselves as non-religious. One half stated that they do not believe Jesus to have been a real historical person. Between 1989 and 1998, Sunday attendance fell from 4.7 million to 3.7 million – a decline of 22% in one decade.

Meanwhile, religiosity in the Global South is hitting a fever pitch. By 2050, six nations could each have 100 million Christians or more, and only one of these nations, the United States, is a western state. Currently, the eight most populous nations of sub-Saharan Africa boast 200 million Christians – about half the population. If the religious distribution remains the same, simply on the basis of population growth, there will be 330 million Christians in these countries by 2025, and if the likelihood of evangelization is taken into account, the number could reach 400 million. Writes Jenkins, "Even in terms of formal adherence to Christianity, sub-Saharan Africa will already have displaced Europe as the chief Christian heartland within a mere quarter-century."

Citizens of western countries will primarily feel the weight of these changes through immigration. Poverty, lack of social infrastructure, and environmental factors will push these burgeoning populations overseas and into the unpopulated stretches of the Global North. By the end of the 21st century, Anglos will be a minority population in Great Britain. In 2000, 35 million Americans were identified as Hispanic. By 2050, that number will have increased to 100 million. In Houston alone, the percentage of foreign born residents has increased from 3% in 1960 to 25% today.

Given these massive demographic shifts, the current level of anxiety and division in the Anglican Communion makes sense. Anglican churches in the Global South have shaken off the last vestiges of colonialism, and are strong advocates for their take on the Christian worldview, because they can afford to be. They know that they are the new faces of Christianity. In fact, because of declining religious participation by native



born Americans, and the rise of immigrant populations, in fifty years it is likely that most churches *in America* will be populated by people who hail from the Global South.

God is calling Episcopalians to accept this new future and prepare for it. Maintaining close ties with our Anglican neighbors in the Global South is essential to the survival of the Episcopal Church. Anglican partners in the Global South can help Episcopalians connect with burgeoning immigrant populations in the United States, who can fill communities left vacant by the decreasing religiosity of native born Americans. Meanwhile, Episcopalians can help Anglicans in the Global South address the galling poverty and universal lack of basic human services in their mission contexts.

The world is deeply divided across the north/south divide. People are hungry for communities with the courage to span this huge cultural chasm. A united Anglican Communion might be such a witness to our broken and divided world. Approving the Anglican Communion Covenant would assure Anglicans around the world that the Episcopal Church is willing to make sacrifices to remain close partners in our global family of Christians. With some established grounds for trust, the work of common mission and witness might continue and grow unabated as the Church and the world grapple with the new, ascendant Global South.

Divide into small groups and discuss.

Choose a recorder to keep notes from your discussion to report to the rest of the group.

Discussion Questions:

- Are you scared by how much the world is changing?
- Have you thought about how these changes will effect your church?
- What steps can you take to make your congregation more welcoming to Global Southerners?
- Is the Anglican Communion Covenant an effective instrument for strengthening the bond between Anglican churches across the Global North/Global South divide?

After 15 minutes, call the group back and have the recorder share with the larger group.

Closing Prayer

“O God, who created all peoples in your image, we thank you for the wonderful diversity of races and cultures in this world. Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of fellowship, and show us your presence in those who differ most from us, until our knowledge of your love is made perfect in our love for all your children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN” *The Book of Common Prayer, 1979*



Session III: Knowing Jesus in Eucharistic Community, and the text of the Anglican Covenant

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, you are with us when we bread bread in your name. Through the power of your sacraments foster in us an earnest dedication to the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church. Teach us by your Holy Spirit to pour ourselves out for one another as you poured yourself out for us. AMEN.

Introduction

Last time we gathered we looked at the changes in the Anglican Communion that led to the current conflict among Anglicans, and we wondered whether the Covenant might provide a way forward. We also wrestled with the beautiful imagery of Revelation 21, as we tried to work out the Church's call to be the New Humanity amongst the old. During the next two sessions, we will survey the Covenant in detail, and flesh out the practical implications of what we find there.

Part 1: Bible Study on Luke 24: 13 – 33

The Biblical Context: It is the day of the Resurrection and some disciples are on the road to Emmaus. On their journey they are joined by a fellow pilgrim who they do not recognize. Once they share bread together, they realize that the stranger who journeyed them was Jesus. We encounter Jesus when we meet one another at table, over bread and wine. Sometimes the costs of maintaining the communities where we can encounter Jesus are high.

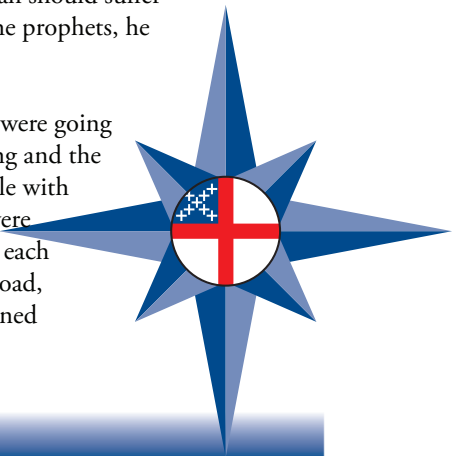
Divide into small groups to read and discuss.

Choose a recorder to keep notes from your discussion to report to the rest of the group.

Luke 24:13-33

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.



Discussion Questions:

- In the disciple's grief and confusion Jesus drew near and taught them. How is Jesus present in the grief and confusion many are feeling in the Anglican Communion?
- How do you experience Christ's presence?
- Jesus is revealed in the breaking of the bread. How is Jesus revealed to us in our communion with our fellow parishioners, Episcopalians, Anglicans and other Christians around the world?
- In Luke 34:13-33 the mission of the disciples changes. Has your encounter with the Risen Christ changed your life's mission? How?

After 15 minutes call the group back and have the recorder share with the larger group.

Part 2: The Anglican Communion Context: The Covenant Itself

Hand out the Anglican Communion Covenant and divide into small groups to read and discuss Section 1, 2, and 3. Choose a recorder to keep notes from your discussion to report to the rest of the group. We have created a short(er) summary of the Anglican Covenant, which might assist you as you break down each section of the document together

Summary of the Introduction

The Anglican Covenant is an identity statement. It envisions an Anglican Communion firmly grounded in God's plan for redeeming the creation. There is a beginning to this narrative – creation, and a conclusion – new creation. The end of the narrative is foreshadowed by the resurrection of Jesus. The Church is called to exhibit the new creation amidst the old, to practice the resurrection life which is the eventual inheritance of the whole creation. The Covenant envisions a Communion which IS the resurrected body of Jesus to the world. The Covenant's main metaphor for this work of the Church is the divine life of the Triune God. The Church's experience of communion is an experience of that divine life, and the Church is called to reflect the life of the Triune God out into the world.

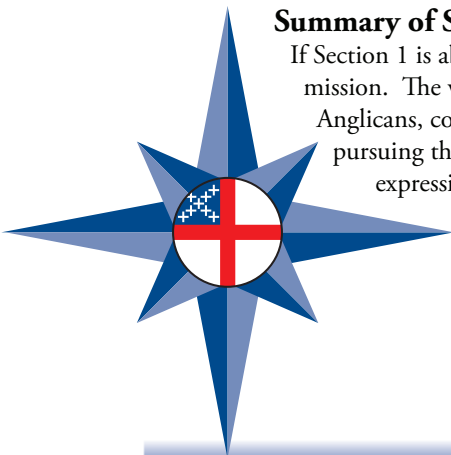
The Covenant introduction reads “Joined in one universal Church, which is Christ's Body, spread throughout the earth, we serve his gospel even as we are enabled to be made one across the dividing walls of human sin and estrangement (Eph 2.12-22). The forms of this life in the Church, caught up in the mystery of divine communion, reveal to the hostile and divisive power of the world the “manifold wisdom of God” (Eph 3:9-10).” This theological narrative wherein the Church is the resurrected body of Jesus AND a vessel for the divine life of the Triune God undergirds everything that follows in the Covenant. The authority of the Covenant's vision of Communion is dependent on the validity and coherence of this theological narrative.

Summary of Section 1

Section 1 provides a bare-bones summary of “Anglican Essentials,” and then specifies the ways that each member church will live out these essentials, accountable to Holy Scripture and the mainstream of ancient Christian tradition. There is a high value given to the power of the scriptural narrative here, as a centering point for our life and a natural boundary for our practice that maintains the fidelity of our Christian witness.

Summary of Section 2

If Section 1 is about ecclesiology, Section 2 is primarily about the Anglican story and our ongoing mission. The work of the Church is remembering and celebrating our heritage, especially as Anglicans, confessing to and repenting of our corporate and individual sin, and relentlessly pursuing the mission of the Church. The Covenant outlines several scriptural and tangible expressions of this mission: proclaiming the Good News of God's in-breaking kingdom, bringing people to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, nourishing new believers through the “divine life” which is our inheritance and making those believers into disciples of Jesus, responding to human need, transforming the structures of society so that they promote the cause of justice, and safeguarding the creation.



Summary of Section 3

Section 3 lays out the “nuts and bolts” of unity. Section 3 clarifies the role of bishops as agents and symbols of unity and lists the Instruments of Communion, along with their purposes. Section 3 also establishes fundamental behaviors that member churches should practice with one another as we discern God’s will on controversial questions of discipline and faith. The behaviors recommended by Section 3 mirror the New Testament emphases on mutual submission and spiritual consensus in Christian community. Section 3 affirms the autonomy and structural integrity of the member churches, and forbids one church from compromising the autonomy and integrity of another.

Discussion Questions:

- What are some of the essential elements of Anglicanism?
- What is the role of scripture in Anglicanism?
- How much do you know about your Anglican heritage?
- How essential is evangelism in your life and in the life of your parish?

After 15 minutes call the group back and have the recorder share with the larger group.

Closing Prayer

“Gracious Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son our Savior. AMEN” Book of Common Prayer, 1979

Remind participants to read the Anglican Communion Covenant before the next session.



Session IV: Practices of Christian Community and the Text of the Anglican Covenant

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, you have called us to work for the good of our enemies, rather than the good of ourselves. By the power of your Holy Spirit, give us strength to make the hard gestures that lead to reconciliation. Give us courage to forgive the debts of our injurers. Help us lay down our attitudes of entitlement. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ, who bore the injury of us all so that we might be healed. AMEN

Introduction

The first sessions have looked at the changes in the Anglican Communion and the first three sections of the Anglican Communion Covenant. This final session looks at the fourth section of the covenant, and examines them in relation to Paul's sobering words about how Christians in community should behave towards one another, especially in times of disagreement and dispute.

Part 1: Bible Study on Philippians 2: 1-11

The Biblical Context: During the first century Paul writes to the young Christian community at Philippi urging humility and unity.

Divide into small groups to read and discuss.

Choose a recorder to keep notes from your discussion to report to the rest of the group.

Philippians 2: 1-11

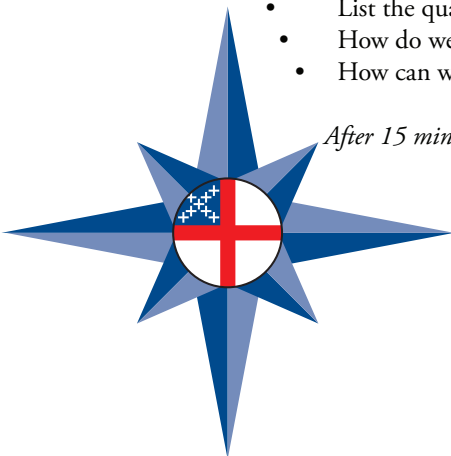
If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Discussion Questions:

- List the qualities of humility that Paul finds in Jesus.
- How do we show are regard for others even when we disagree?
- How can we support one another as we seek to have the same mind as Christ Jesus?

After 15 minutes call the group back and have the recorder share with the larger group.



Part 2: The Anglican Covenant Context: The Covenant Itself

Hand out the Anglican Communion Covenant and divide into small groups to read and discuss Section 4. Choose a recorder to keep notes from your discussion to report to the rest of the group. We have provided a summary of the Anglican Covenant that might assist you as you break down Section 4 together, along with a visual representation of the Instruments of Communion

Summary of Section 4

Section 4 establishes the means by which member churches of Communion will adopt the Covenant. Significantly, only churches that are already recognized provinces of the Communion have the option of submitting to the Anglican Covenant. Likewise, Section 4 clarifies that the Covenant does not compromise the autonomy or integrity of the churches which make up the Anglican Communion. The Covenant explicitly states that it neither supersedes nor nullifies the Constitutions and Canons of covenanting churches.

The Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion, responsible to the Primate's Meeting and the Anglican Consultative Council, is the legislative body that would administer the Covenant and field complaints made by one province against another. The Standing Committee's first obligation is to resolve conflict. If "common mind" cannot be reached on a controversial question, the Standing Committee has the authority to request that a covenanting church defer action on said question until a resolution is worked out. If a church persists in acting against the request of the Standing Committee, the Standing Committee can recommend "relational consequences" be visited upon the member church, and their recommendations can address either the Instruments of Communion, or the rest of the Communion provinces.

Any church may withdraw from the Anglican Covenant after signing it, but the text makes clear that there might be "relational consequences" that result from such a withdrawal. Any covenanting church can offer amendment to the text of the Covenant. The Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion will field such amendments and then promulgate them to all covenanting provinces. For an amendment to take effect, it must be ratified by three quarters of the covenanting churches.

Discussion Questions:

- What do you perceive to be the greatest challenges for the churches as they live into this controversial section of the covenant?
- Have you ever experienced a consensus building process?
- What are the cultural barriers to this process?
- How would you like to see your parish respond to the Covenant?

After 15 minutes call the group back and have the recorder share with the larger group.

Closing Prayer

"O God, the Father of all, whose Son commanded us to love our enemies: Lead them and us from prejudice into truth; deliver them and us from hatred, cruelty, and revenge; and in your good time enable us all to stand reconciled before you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN" *Book of Common Prayer, 1979*



Glossary of Terms

Anglican Province – The term used to designate a particular, independent Church within the Anglican Communion. Thus, the Episcopal Church is an Anglican province, but the Diocese of Texas alone is not. Provinces are recognized based on their membership in the various synods that govern the Anglican Communion like the Primate’s Meeting and the Anglican Consultative Council. There is a drawn out process of petition required for bodies of Christians to be certified an Anglican province and provinces are demarcated geographically – there is one province per geographical region. There are some requirements that need be met for a body of believers to qualify as a province. A province must contain dioceses. A province must have an archbishop or presiding bishop. A province must have a province-wide synod of some sort, like our own General Convention. A province must have a set of Constitutions and Canons which govern its life.

Communion – Derived from the Greek word κοινωνία, (koinonia). Communion is the special state of relational closeness that persists between Christians in the same family of believers. Christians in communion with one another are expected to treat each other with great, self-sacrificial love, and practice a willingness to both forgive and rebuke one another at appropriate times. In the middle of the 19th century, largely at the urging of Episcopalians, disparate Anglican churches began using this word to describe the union that existed between different independent Anglican churches.

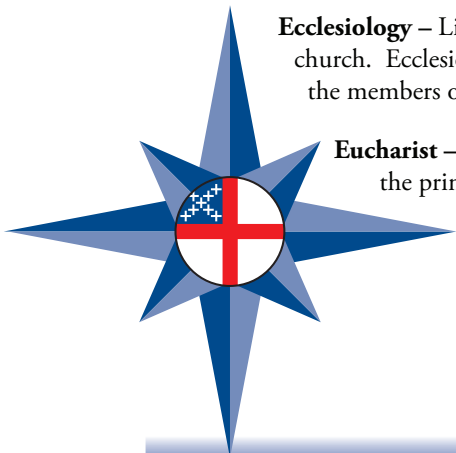
Constitutions and Canons – Documents of labyrinthine complexity and relentless thoroughness, constitutions and canons are the laws that create the infrastructure of churches. The Diocese of Texas has constitutions and canons that give it a shape, an authorized leadership with proscribed powers, and a set of normal practices to use in the dispatch of its business. The Episcopal Church, likewise, has similar documents. There are attorneys who specialize in “canon law,” and are schooled in the peculiarities of these documents. Constitutions and Canons often contain “accession clauses,” which help clarify whose body of canon law is the more authoritative. Thus, in the Constitutions and Canons of the Diocese of Texas, there is a clause which ‘accedes’ to the Constitutions and Canons of the Episcopal Church.

Covenant – In its particular Jewish/Christian variant, this word refers to the agreement that binds human beings to one another and to God. Covenants are extremely important to Judaism and Christianity because both faiths derive their identity from the belief that God has called these communities to the special work of being His instrument in the broken world. Covenants remind the people of God that they are set apart from the rest of humanity for the purposes of God. Covenants remind the people of God that they are brothers and sisters, and must treat each other with uncommon love and sacrifice. Covenants remind the people of God that God is holy, and being the people of such a God requires a willingness to be holy too.

Creation – The universe, generated by God. In biblical vocabulary, the creation is divided into two parts – heaven and earth. Heaven describes the realm where God resides. It is not so much a physical space as a dimension. In Heaven, God’s will is absolute. Earth describes the material universe where we reside. On Earth, God’s will is not absolute, and evil and death are allowed to exist. The great drama of the scripture, and the theological narrative that underlies the Anglican Covenant, is the story of how God brings heaven into being on earth, dispatching evil and death permanently in the process.

Ecclesiology – Literally, the body of knowledge that pertains to the *ekklesia*, the Greek word for church. Ecclesiology is a particular field of theology that focuses on what the Church is, and how the members of the Church interrelate.

Eucharist – From the Greek word εὐχαριστία, a verb which means ‘to thank.’ Eucharist is the primary act of Christian worship derived from the ritual Passover meal of the nation of Israel. At Eucharist, followers of Jesus offer bread and wine in response to Jesus’ actions at his last Passover with his disciples before his crucifixion. The bread and wine symbolize the presence of Jesus among the Church. In sharing a symbolic meal together, the members of the Church are also reminded of their necessarily sacrificial relationships with one another under the lordship of Jesus.



Global North/Global South - It has been fashionable for historians and students of the world to divide the planet geographically into groups of people who share more or less similar experiences and societal norms. The names we use to indicate these groups have been a subject of some controversy, because they can be derisive. A common and antiquated dividing line was between “The East” and “The West,” meaning the side of the Roman Empire which centered in Rome, and the side of the Roman Empire which centered in Constantinople (now called Istanbul). More derisive is the three-tiered system that divides countries between “1st world,” “2nd world,” and “3rd world” based on standards of living, wealth and industrial infrastructure. Now, the most common way of referring to differing geographical chunks of society is through the use of the terms ‘Global North’ and ‘Global South.’ The Global North includes the European countries, China, and the United States. The Global South includes countries in Africa and South America. The Global South is sometimes also referred to as the “developing world.”

Instruments of Communion – The Anglican Communion is governed by four “instruments,” that maintain the communion between provinces. The four instruments are as follows:



The Archbishop of Canterbury: The See of Canterbury is the highest office in the Church of England, and as such is the highest *spiritual* office of the Anglican Communion. The Archbishop is appointed by the British monarch on the recommendation of the Prime Minister of the British parliament. While the Archbishop has no power to dictate policy in any province other than the Church of England, he wields considerable influence in Anglican and ecumenical circles, and has great power to call the provinces of the Communion together.



The Lambeth Conference: First held in 1867, the Lambeth Conference is a meeting of Anglican bishops the world around that is convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace. The Conference meets every ten years. Like the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference has no actual power to dictate policy in any province of the Communion, but the Lambeth Conference is the closest thing the Anglican Communion has to a Communion-wide synod, and many Anglicans perceive its resolutions to carry the moral force of law, if not the actual force of law. Others are less persuaded.

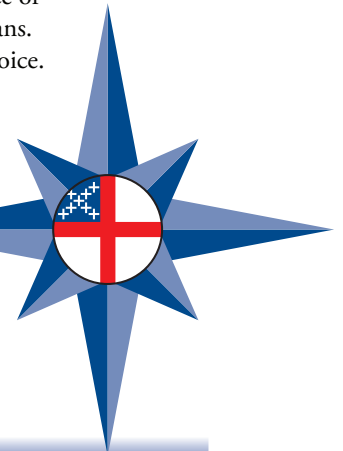


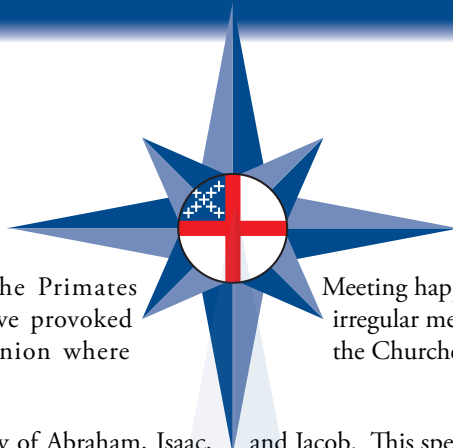
The Anglican Consultative Council: Created by the Lambeth Conference in 1968, the ACC is organized by proportional representation from provinces. It is the only Instrument of Communion with lay representation. The ACC

has as their primary role the fostering of good intercommunion relations, and the furtherance of ecumenical dialogues between the Anglican Communion and other global bodies of Christians. The ACC is the Instrument of Communion where the Episcopal Church has the strongest voice.



The Primates' Meeting: Established by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1978, the Primate's Meeting provides opportunities for the leaders of each Anglican province to come together for fellowship and consultation





with one another. Ideally, the Primates strains in the Communion have provoked is the Instrument of Communion where strongest voice.

Meeting happens every two years, but current irregular meetings. The Primates' Meeting the Churches of the Global South have the

Israel - Israel refers to the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This special family of human beings were called out of Egypt by God, and given a land and a purpose – to help God renew the creation. The writers of the New Testament, all Jews, took the story of Israel and molded it around Jesus. They saw the Church as the fulfillment Israel's purpose, the new creation God was laboring to create. The Church thus became the new Israel, sharing the calling and the intimate relationship with God which characterized the relationship between the blood family of Abraham and their God.

Primate – A term that engenders some confusion, when used in reference to Anglican polity, it does not refer to an ape. The primate of a province is the highest ranking cleric in that province, who represents their province at the Primate's Meeting, one of the Instruments of the Anglican Communion. Some provinces style their primates as archbishops, others as presiding bishops, with powers and lengths of term varying across the Communion, according to the Constitutions and Canons of various provinces.

Triune God/Trinity – Christians are known for their mind bending doctrine of the Trinity – the belief that God is one in substance but three in person: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three persons are derived from the names of God in the scriptures, where he is the Father of creation and humanity; the Son, who saves the world, who is Jesus, and the Holy Spirit who moves intimately within and between God's people, empowering them and healing them and bonding them together. Only the Orthodox Church emphasizes the Trinity more than Anglicans. Anglican thinkers have long used the relationship between the three members of the Trinity as an example for the relationship which should exist between members of the Church. Thus, the Anglican Covenant speaks right from the center of our heritage in seeing the Church as a vessel for the “divine life of the Triune God.”

Suggestions for Further Reading:

Donovan, Vincent. *Christianity Rediscovered*. Orbis Books, 2003.

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Prichard, Robert. *A History of the Episcopal Church*. Morehouse Publishing, 1999.

Williams, Rowan. *Anglican Identities*. Cowley Publications, 2004.

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