

American Anglican Council Statement on the Primates' 2007 Communiqué

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The American Anglican Council (AAC) expressed this week its gratitude for the work of the Anglican primates during their meeting in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, held Feb. 14-19, 2007, and applauded the strong stance taken in their [final communiqué](#) as well as the progress made on developing an Anglican Covenant.

"This is the most important decision taken by the global Anglican Communion since the last Lambeth Resolutions were issued in 1998," said the Rev. Canon David C. Anderson, AAC president and CEO. "The clock is now running on The Episcopal Church, and it is running fast."

The primates' communiqué, issued later than expected on Monday, Feb. 19 due to last-minute deliberations, issues an ultimatum to The Episcopal Church (TEC) in the United States with regard to its stances on human sexuality. In particular, the church is given seven months (until Sept. 30, 2007) to convey its definitive position on the blessing of same-sex unions and the elevation to episcopal orders of a candidate living in a same-sex relationship.

"The meeting in Dar es Salaam moved TEC firmly into the penalty box, which they will not emerge from without a true, 180-degree turn from the behavior and theology that has become the norm in many parts of the U.S. church over the past several decades," Canon Anderson said. "Fudging the issues is no longer possible because the primates are 'on to' TEC and understand that they have been saying one thing and doing another."

"Before this meeting, many primates could not fathom that the bishops and presiding bishop would play fast and loose with their words in order to deceive the primates or avoid sending a clear message," Canon Anderson continued. "Now, a clear message is demanded, and if it is not given, the church will suffer the long-threatened consequence of losing full membership in the worldwide Anglican family."

The AAC was especially pleased with portions of the communiqué which gave special recognition to the unique positions of the Convocation of Anglicans in North America (CANA) and the Anglican Mission in America (AMiA); under the primates' recommendations, these groups, led by American-based bishops, will be allowed to continue operating separately from TEC, and are recognized as legitimate parts of the Anglican Communion. In addition, the AAC applauded the communiqué's demand for a stop to all litigation within TEC, and urged TEC both nationally and at the diocesan level to take this admonition seriously.

"The communiqué is a workable document, despite some difficult areas," Canon Anderson said. "The proposal for a pastoral council and primatial vicar, for example, contains some rough spots that will be of particular concern for congregations linked to overseas dioceses that are not part of AMiA or CANA. Nevertheless, the document is strong overall, especially for its reaffirmation of Communion-wide teaching on sexuality and the concrete nature of its recommendations for the U.S. church."

Canon Anderson also expressed support for the developments made on the Anglican Covenant and believes that once it is refined and finalized over the next several years, it will serve as an important unifying factor for the Anglican Communion.

In a related development, the AAC also announced this week its formation of a Communiqué Compliance Office, which will monitor TEC's acts of compliance and non-compliance with respect to the primates' requirements throughout the period leading up to the Sept. 30 deadline.

“As a non-ecclesial body, the AAC is in a unique position to function as a watchdog on TEC’s compliance with the demands of the Dar es Salaam communiqué,” Canon Anderson explained. “Over the coming months, the newly created office will continuously gather information from around the United States and provide monthly accountings to the primates so that there is no doubt where TEC stands when the clock runs out.”

The AAC asks that anyone with pertinent information on TEC compliance to the communiqué’s demands send that information to the AAC by email or U.S. Postal mail (visit [\[url=http://www.americananglican.org\]](http://www.americananglican.org)<http://www.americananglican.org>[\[url\]](http://www.americananglican.org) for contact information).