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From Executive Council: A letter to Bishop John Paterson



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A letter to the Rt. Rev. John C. Paterson, Chair of the Anglican Consultative Council, from the Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold and the Very Rev. George L. W. Werner on behalf of the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church.

The Executive Council met in special session at the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois, to consider the request of the Primates to "voluntarily withdraw" our members for a time from participation in the Anglican Consultative Council. This is a weighty matter for the Episcopal Church since the ACC is the primary instrument of communion in which the fullness of the Body of Christ is represented. Representative consultation is an essential component of our life as a church. We struggled to discern how best to respond to the request.

We are acutely aware that we meet in a time of great distress and need in the wider world. War, famine and disease stalk the earth. We express our passionate commitment to the mission of the church and especially to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals endorsed by our General Convention.

We are unanimous in our desire to do all that we can to preserve and further the bonds of affection in the "new humanity" created by Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:15). This in our view constitutes the very essence of our life together as Anglican Christians. We firmly believe that the only way to address the things that divide us is for "Christians of good will ... to engage honestly and frankly with each other" (Windsor Report, paragraph 146). We are therefore heartened by the decision of the Chair of the ACC, responding to the Primates' communiqué to include in the program for the upcoming meeting in Nottingham an opportunity for a consultation at which major contributions will come from the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada.

We are mindful that Christ has made us members of one body, and that no part can say to any other "I have no need of you." At the same time we wish to express our openness to the concerns and beliefs of others. In the spirit of the Covenant Statement recently adopted by our House of Bishops, we voluntarily withdraw our members from official participation in the ACC as it meets in Nottingham. As an expression of our desire "to bear one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2), we are asking our members to be present at the meeting to listen to reports on the life and ministry we share across the Communion and to be available for conversation and consultation.

Please be assured of our prayers and continuing support for the mission we share in the Risen Christ.

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